

# SMITH'S

MAGAZINE




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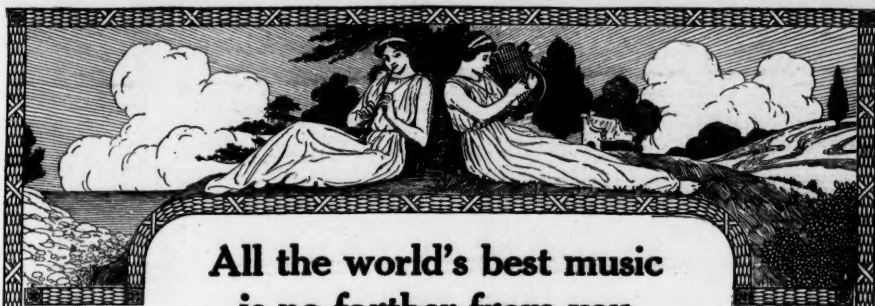
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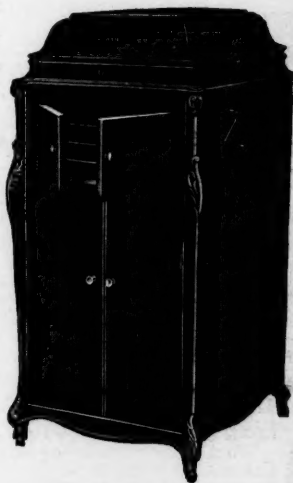
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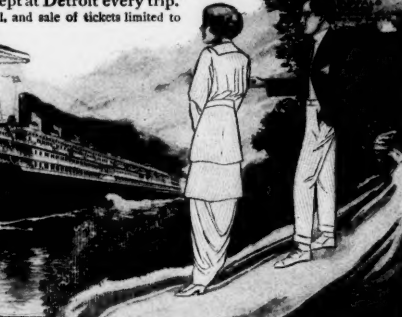
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Vol. XIX

# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 4

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 19

JULY, 1914

NUMBER 4

## The Unknown Quantity

By Louise Driscoll

Author of "Her Inheritance," "And Mary Ellen Sang," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

### CHAPTER I.

WHEN Phillip Winslow was a little boy, he used to linger before the offices of Jarvis & Co., as he went back and forth to school. They were rather imposing offices for a small town. At the front were large plate-glass windows through which occasional glimpses might be had of the interior, although usually the shades were raised from the bottom of the window, contrary to Phillip's customary experience with shades. Just as we all find certain childish impressions indelible, Phillip in later years was unable to escape an underlying conviction that a shade raised from the bottom of a window hid from him interesting and mysterious things.

Phillip knew that in the front of one room was a desk at which sat an elderly gentleman of military appearance, hedged from the rest of the clerks by a high fence that gave him a sort of privacy. Behind this barrier was a large, open place where six or eight young men stood day after day by a high shelf, and wrote and figured and looked into huge folios.

The place fascinated Phillip. The only flaw that presented itself to mar his complete admiration and respect

was occasioned by the office boy, who, although dignified by a neat uniform with many buttons on it, and by the advantage of constant association with so many gentlemen, would sometimes so far demean himself as to offer insult to Phillip by gesture or contortion of his features; in which art he was so adept that Phillip, who was a very shy, rather timid little boy, without any marked accomplishment among his kind, was fain to admire while he regretted.

To "get a job with Jarvis" was the ambition of a large part of the youth of Wimbleton, for Jarvis & Co. offered a variety of jobs to various sorts of men, and had a pleasant reputation for paying fair wages and dealing honestly. As long as Phillip lived, he would remember the pride and excitement at home when his stepbrother, Jim Peterson, came in and announced that he was going to work the next morning for Carson, who was the carpenter at Jarvis', and who kept a gang of men busy all the time with changes and repairs.

Jim was Mrs. Winslow's son by her first husband. She had been a widow with three children when she had married Phillip's father, and had added

his little motherless boy to her brood. Her two eldest children, Jim and Eva, were lusty youngsters, to whom the law of life was a word and a blow, and life itself a scramble for what one could get under such circumstances as might be. They openly despised the timid little boy who seemed to shrink as much from the word as he did from the blow, but Anice, the youngest, was gentler. She was a little younger than Phillip, and he found he could play with her peaceably. They formed a sort of compact after a while, and told each other all their funny little secrets, and Phillip's first fight was for her. He knocked Jim down one day, when Jim struck at her, because she got in his way. He was as much surprised as Jim when the bigger boy went over. Phillip was somewhat frightened by his own temerity, but Jim understood the blow as an argument, just as he understood Eva's finger nails, which occasionally came into play in a difference of opinion.

After his father died, Phillip seemed more than ever a stranger bird in the nest; "taking the food out of my own children's mouths," Mrs. Winslow sometimes complained. This situation was ameliorated in some mysterious way by a quantity to which Mrs. Winslow always referred hopefully as "the land," a strip of property the late Clifford Winslow had been persuaded to buy in some remote forest country of Minnesota. Mr. Winslow had never seen "the land"; he had simply given the small sum of money that represented his whole capital to a fluent conversationalist who had happened to cross his path at a critical moment. "A very interesting gentleman," he had always declared the agent to have been, and had comforted himself with an inverted version of Pharaoh's dream in which seven lean years were followed by seven fat ones.

The lean years were still with him

when he gave up the struggle with life—always a little too much for him—leaving to his widow and his little son the carefully cherished papers that represented his pleasant colloquies with the "very interesting gentleman." Mrs. Winslow paid the small taxes on the property as a kind of religious rite, though it was not always convenient for her to pay even small taxes. The consciousness of owning land, even this remote, useless strip of it, gave her a self-respect that carried her through rather trying periods with dignity, and little Phillip was invested with the edge of the halo.

She had been very proud of her second husband, though he had not proved a very useful appanage. He had possessed the appearance and manners of a gentleman, somewhat frayed and worn at the edges, but unmistakably good material to begin with. So Phillip found himself sheltered by this vicarious remnant of affection and pride, consolidated in partnership with his stepmother in relation to the land they held jointly, and tolerated and even considered in the home she managed to keep together.

He was a delicate boy, and he seemed so much younger than he was that at fifteen he was still in school, although Jim, who was only two years older, was earning his living, and flaunting eight dollars at the supper table every Saturday night. Jim gave his mother two dollars for board, and felt very high and independent.

The principal of the school took a great interest in Phillip. He had the sort of mind that calculates swiftly and accurately, and the teachers used to give him long sums to do and lay traps to catch him in his computations. They made a game of it, and he grew more friendly with them than he had ever been before with any one. It was in this way, although he was always reticent, that his dream of a place in the

bookkeeping department at Jarvis' was revealed; and after a while the principal took the trouble to see old Mr. Jarvis himself and recommend Phillip as a likely boy.

Old Mr. Jarvis prided himself on the number of likely boys he had started on their way in life, and so it came about, rather more than a year after Jim had started work in the carpenter's gang, that Phillip was called into the school office one morning, and told that after his graduation a few weeks later, there would be a place for him behind those shades that were raised from the bottom of the windows. Something in Phillip's throat kept him from saying very much. He thought afterward that he had not thanked Mr. Cothorpe properly, and was rather uncomfortable about it. He was not used to saying very much, anyway.

As he started home from school, he thought about telling his news to Anice and experienced a thrill of pleasure in the anticipation. When he thought of Jim, he found himself remembering suddenly the day he had knocked Jim down. His feeling now was very much the same as it had been on that other occasion. All the familiar things along the way seemed to him to be a little changed, a little bigger and brighter and finer; a little more friendly, perhaps. He looked at the dark-green shades with a queer, small stirring of pride, as if he owned them.

## CHAPTER II.

Jim was drying his hands on the roller towel that hung beside the kitchen sink when Phillip entered. Mrs. Winslow was hurrying back and forth between the stove and the table where supper was to be served. Mrs. Winslow always gave one the impression of haste. She seemed forever to be making an effort to catch up with some interrupted task. It was difficult for her

to keep order. The kitchen was full of smoke, and the air heavy with the odor of frying fat. Phillip choked a little as he came in, but he did not think of complaining. He wondered what supper was like in Mr. Jarvis' house. He could not quite picture old Mr. Jarvis sitting down to eat in a cloud of bacon smoke.

Eva, who had studied stenography and obtained a position lately, came in and pulled off her hat with a fretful gesture.

"How I do hate this smelly kitchen!" she complained. "I don't see why we can't eat in the front room."

"It makes so many more steps," said Mrs. Winslow.

"Well, I'm just ashamed to have my friends see how we live," fretted Eva. "I hate this house, anyway. I don't see why we can't move."

Jim dropped the roller towel and rubbed his rough hands together.

"It's the cost of living that keeps us down," he remarked satirically. "Of course you and me can work for our livings, but there's some that has to be supported like gentlemen, and can't get their hands dirty."

"Don't quarrel, children," protested Mrs. Winslow wearily, and then her voice grew sharper as she turned to Phillip. "It does seem, Phip," she said, "as if you might get something to do now. I don't see how I can do any more for you. Not but what I'd like to give you a real education——"

Jim uttered a derisive snort, and she stopped him with a gesture. "Phip gave me almost all the money he earned working for Hennessy last vacation," she declared. "He's paid the taxes for three years now. He does more than my own children do——"

"Cut it out, ma," said Jim. He seated himself at the table and speared a potato with his fork, beginning to peel it with the dexterity of long practice.

"I don't see why we can't have mashed potatoes," said Eva.

"Me and you, Eva, being working folks, can't have what we want," Jim answered her.

Phillip, still standing, looked at his stepbrother curiously. Some finer instinct in the boy had always made him try not to dislike Jim very much. He had never known any very strong emotions, and he shrank from the coarser ones. This moment of achievement was the sweetest thing that had ever come to him. He had intended to wait for Anice, but a little excitement hurried him, and he told his secret.

"I've got a job," he said.

"You ain't!" cried Mrs. Winslow, not from any wish to dispute the statement, but merely as an expression of delighted surprise. Perhaps the strongest feeling she had for Phillip was a wish to take pride in him. It seemed to justify her choice of a second husband.

"Huh!" remarked Jim doubtfully, but with curiosity.

"What is it, and why didn't you tell us before?" asked Eva.

"I was waiting for Anice," said Phillip. "Where is she?"

"Lying down," said Mrs. Winslow, and her eyes became a little troubled. "Anice don't seem real strong. I'll call her." Her voice rose stridently. "Oh, Anice! Anice! Supper's ready. Come on down and hear about Phip's job."

"Why don't you tell us?" urged Jim, but Phillip waited until Anice had come in.

"I've got a job, Anice," he called to her.

"Oh, lovely!" she cried. "What is it?"

"How do you know it's lovely?" growled Jim, with his mouth full of potato.

"It's bookkeeper with Jarvis," said Phillip, unable to hold his secret any longer.

Jim dropped his fork, and stared at him for a minute.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Anice. "And that's why you worked over those old problems all the time!" She clasped her hands over her mother's arm. "Isn't it lovely?" she said again.

"Mr. Cothorpe got it for me," said Phillip. "He told them I was pretty good at figures."

"It seems too good to be true," said Mrs. Winslow slowly, and she looked at her stepson, as if she doubted the truth. Phillip began to swagger a very little; he wasn't capable of much, but he was enjoying the situation immensely, and beginning to feel a touch of self-confidence that was like wine to him.

"I've been thinking about it for a long time," he said.

"Thinking's cheap," said Jim, who had begun to eat again.

Eva looked at her stepbrother with a new interest.

"Well, I must say I think it's fine," she said. "You'll be too swell for us."

Mrs. Winslow began to look worried.

"What do you get?" she asked.

"Sixteen dollars a week to begin with," announced Phillip, watching the effect of his words, and dizzy with gratified pride. "The head bookkeeper gets forty, and Mr. Masten, the manager, gets sixty."

"You ain't manager yet," remarked Jim, refusing to be dazzled by these visions of wealth.

"Mr. Masten began just where I do," replied Phillip, with a new obstinacy.

Jim went out as soon as he had finished eating his supper. Eva lingered to offer a few civilities. She had a real regard for the young gentlemen in Jarvis' office. They were not too high for her aspiration, but enough higher than her condition to be invested with interest.



*Robert Algraef*

*Not one of them dreamed that Anice was taking her heart in her hands, and giving it to Phillip for him to step on, if need be, on his way to some happier, better thing.*



"Maybe you can get me a place there," she suggested, laughing.

"Oh, I don't know," Phillip answered. "Maybe, some time." He felt very kindly toward Eva. Her deference pleased him, and he thought she was right in asking to have the house a little tidier.

"Don't get your coat against the stove," cautioned his stepmother, and she brushed a bit of lint from his sleeve. Anice watched him with entranced, admiring eyes. He had become a personage in the family.

### CHAPTER III.

In after years, when Phillip looked back at the moment when he entered the employ of Jarvis & Co., he was always conscious of a pity almost poignant for the boy he used to be. He was the youngest accountant who had ever stood at the high shelf that served as a desk in that office, and he was quite unlike the other young men he met there. Most of those other young men belonged to families of good standing in the village; some of them came from families that constituted the local aristocracy. There were always a few who were comparatively humble, for old Mr. Jarvis made a point of this, and prided himself upon the number of young men he had started on the road to prosperity. It was sometimes a little difficult to mix the elements, for social lines in a small town are as definite as they are absurd, the large toad in a small puddle being a fable whose application is eternally new.

Social ethics presented an entirely new problem to Phillip, so unconscious was he of degrees in pride. Mr. Jarvis' grandson could afford to be affable to every one, but the distinction between the son of a local small tradesman and Phillip Winslow was emphasized because there was less likelihood of its being apparent to the casual ob-

server. Thus, to Phillip's wholly inexperienced and innocent mind, Ralph Wharton seemed to be what he described to Anice as "proud," while young Mr. Jarvis was "real friendly."

Young Mr. Jarvis was six years older than Phillip and just out of college. From early boyhood he had been identified with the business and trained according to his grandfather's theories. He had not been altogether satisfied to find his life thus mapped and planned for him, and had passed through certain stages of rebellion, but the pressure had been relentless, and the long discipline had told in the end; he was not born of a family that forsook the beaten path to experiment in strange ways. He noticed Phillip's respectful admiration, and, although secretly a little amused by it, he was kinder to Phillip for it. He was much more amused by Ralph Wharton's careful attention to the demands of what he was pleased to call his "social position," and once or twice he saved Phillip from an embarrassment Phillip never suspected. Phillip was quite unaware that he was being snubbed, and this very unconsciousness pleased Paul Jarvis, who remarked casually to his grandfather:

"Young Winslow is a pretty good sort, I think. Fine grained, you know—a gentleman by instinct. He's worth more now than Wharton ever will be."

On the strength of which, old Mr. Jarvis, passing through the office one morning, paused to greet Phillip.

"I'm told you are doing very well here," he said pleasantly; and Phillip was very happy about that.

As time went by, however, Phillip discovered that he was almost as much alone as he had always been. He did not seem to progress in his acquaintance with the office force. They all said "Good morning" as pleasantly as possible, and exchanged opinions on the news of the day and the affairs of the



business, but outside the office he was as much alone as ever. Each of the other young men seemed to have a complete circle of friends and interests and to take it for granted that every one else had. Phillip began to wonder why he lacked these things. He did not care for Jim's friends or for Eva's. The sort of people he wanted to know didn't seem to know about him or to care. He seemed to be all alone in the world.

He went out of the office one day with Paul Jarvis, and they were overtaken by a motor car that drew in by the curb. Paul's sister and Silvia Colfax called to him, and he turned from Phillip to answer them.

"We're going home," said Silvia Colfax. "Don't you want to come with us?"

"Thank you," said Paul. "I'd like to. Good-by, Winslow."

He was perfectly friendly, but Phillip felt dismissed. Miss Jarvis glanced toward him without any sign of recognition, but Miss Colfax smiled with a little half bow, not really a greeting, but a very gracious courtesy. Phillip went on to the corner, and the car passed him there. They were all laughing and seemed to have forgotten his existence. Jim Peterson would have immediately concluded that they were laughing at him, but Phillip was less egotistic. He simply realized that he was very lonely. The memory of Silvia Colfax's glance as she had half apologized for taking Paul from him comforted him subtly.

"I wonder what it is?" he asked himself. "I wonder what I ought to have to be like them."

He wondered why they hadn't asked him to go with them; what it was he lacked that no one seemed to want him. As he came nearer home, he was glad they hadn't asked him. He didn't want them to see this place. Eva was right. It would be better if they could move.

He asked his stepmother where Anice was, but she told him Anice had gone out. Anice was sewing for a dressmaker; she made little ornaments for elaborate gowns and did odd bits of embroidery. It was a sort of work she could do at home. Anice did not seem to be very strong and unconsciously they were all adapting themselves to this condition. They all thought she was going to be stronger pretty soon. So she took tonics and rested a good deal, and none of them realized that she was resting more and more all the time.

She always brightened when Phillip came in. She kept her prettiest dresses and her gayest manner for him. He could not know how she drooped after he had left her; how she watched, alert to meet the moment, the time she knew must come, when he should leave them and find some neater, pleasanter home. She tried to make the place more attractive, but she was not strong enough to do the actual work that was needed, and disorder never troubled Mrs. Winslow. Mrs. Winslow's idea of what she called "straightening things out" was to move the whole confusion from one spot to another; so a pile of papers would travel around the room from one resting place to another, like children playing at "Going to Jerusalem," until some one else carried them out.

Phillip never dreamed how Anice watched for him and planned for him and exerted her strength to interest him and give him her attention. Her pride in him was always touched with the fear of losing him. He watched the manners and the speech of his fellow clerks, and carefully cultivated what he admired. It was fortunate that at this imitative stage he had a certain rather fine discrimination. Jim laughed at him, but the women all defended him. Eva and Anice imitated his speech, and Anice bought an English grammar and studied it secretly. Phillip must never

be embarrassed by them, she thought. She brooded like a mother over his progress.

Phillip worked faithfully and had a real genius for the work. At the end of the first year his salary was increased. A little later one of the higher clerks left to take a position elsewhere, and Phillip was given his place. He was advanced steadily.

Jim called this luck, and made ever more frequent reference to unfair conditions that pushed one man up and held another down. Jim was unable to believe that prosperity was in any way related to the individual. He seemed to think some indiscriminating power somewhere gave with one hand and withheld with the other. He felt himself a victim of adverse fate, and was convinced it was some one's fault that Phillip's salary should be doubled in the course of three or four years while his own remained practically stationary. He talked of partiality on the part of the management, and spoke scornfully of "bootlicking" after he had met Phillip walking with Paul Jarvis. He had refused to speak to them.

The climax of this dissension, and the realization of Anice's fears, came awkwardly one day when Jim was sent into the office to do some work there. He came as an assistant to another man, and the work was in a part of the room directly opposite the corner where Phillip sat. Phillip had a desk now, a little apart from the shelf where the clerks stood, and a screen that he used to modify the light as he wished or to shut himself away from the rest of the room. The screen was partly pushed back this morning, and Jim saw his stepbrother as he came into the room.

Phillip did not at once look up from his work, and, when he did, Jim's back was turned toward him. He could have called to him, or gone across the room to speak to him, and he thought of both,

but hesitated because he was not sure of his reception. So they worked silently in the same room for half an hour, and then Jim went out, hurt and angry.

He made bitter reference at supper time to folks who were so stuck up they couldn't speak to other folks.

"Why didn't you look at me?" protested Phillip. "I didn't know what to do. I was busy, too."

"You could speak to that fool Jarvis," said Jim. "You keep all your cheap and nasty airs for your brother."

"I wish you wouldn't feel that way," Phillip began rather helplessly.

He was really sorry that he hadn't made a point of speaking to Jim, and risking Jim's reply, but the soft answer failed to turn away wrath, and Jim replied with a coarse imitation of Phillip's gentler manner, and an insulting phrase that his mother quickly rebuked. Eva came to her mother's defense when Jim said what he thought about people minding their own business, and accused his mother of having always favored the only one of them who had no right to be in the home.

"The workhouse," said Jim, "that's where he belonged. Small thanks we get for keeping him out of it!"

"We!" repeated Eva, with an irritating giggle. "A lot you have had to do with keeping any one, Jim Peterson!"

It was a very unpleasant time, and after Jim had left, slamming the door behind him, Mrs. Winslow was whimpering hysterically, and Eva was in one of her old rages. It was Eva who drove Jim out at last. He had a certain respect for her powers of battle. Anice was very white, and her blue eyes shone like stars. Phillip's heart stirred as he looked at her.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said to her. "We've tired you all out."

She turned to him with a little grateful gesture, and then helped him to what she believed was the inevitable

end. Not one of them dreamed that Anice was taking her heart in her hands, and giving it to Phillip for him to step on, if need be, on his way to some happier, better thing.

"I've thought sometimes," she said, "that maybe you'd be more comfortable if you boarded somewhere else."

Phillip stared at her, without answering. Mrs. Winslow uttered a tearful protest. Eva looked interested.

"Why, of course he would," said Eva.

Anice smiled at him steadily. "It can't help being awfully unpleasant for you to be meeting Jim like this all the time," she said. "We would all understand. You could come to see us." She brushed his coat sleeve lightly, with a little, affectionate gesture. "I don't mean that we want to turn you out," she said.

She made it easy for him. They talked for some time, and Mrs. Winslow shed a few more tears, but it was settled at last; and when Phillip was alone in his room that night, he found himself greatly relieved by the prospect. He felt a few twinges at the thought of leaving Anice, and decided he would come to see her very often. He thought Anice seemed slighter and paler than ever.

"She ought not to be doing any work," he said to himself, "and I'm going to see that she doesn't."

So the next morning he had a talk with his stepmother, and, although Anice protested at first, it was arranged that he should give her a sum of money every week until she was feeling enough better to take up her sewing again. She promised him that she would go out every day and get plenty of fresh air and exercise.

"It does seem good to think I haven't got to get anything done on time," she said.

She saw that her compliance comforted Phillip, and she was willing to

do anything, to accept anything, that would make him happier. So Phillip, who had never known any women but his stepmother and her daughters and his teachers in the public school, who was utterly inexperienced in the ways of the world, who had never been out of Wimbledon in his life, went to live in a boarding house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Phillip was getting a good salary by this time. It seemed very large to him, for his habits were inexpensive and his tastes undeveloped. He had saved some money, and felt that he could pay what seemed to him a pretty high price for his board, so he chose a very good house where there were a number of families staying all the time and many transient visitors who were willing to pay a higher rate than was asked at the hotel.

When he came into the dining room on the first evening, he was a little embarrassed and shy at first. Every one said "Good evening" to him, and he replied modestly and found himself included in the conversation, which was general and turned upon some topic that was being freely discussed in the daily papers. Phillip, who read the papers carefully, was able to take part and soon lost his self-consciousness. The impersonality of the conversation pleased him, and he was also impressed with having dinner at night; it was his first experience of that custom. He was impressed by the two neat waitresses and the deftness of their service. The ladies all wore pretty dresses, and the place seemed very pleasant to him.

There was a long table, at which he was seated, and several smaller tables at which families were grouped. At Phillip's right was an elderly woman who was rather deaf and very hungry, and who consequently gave him but slight attention. At his left sat a very

pretty girl, a girl quite unlike any one Phillip had ever seen before. She was very quietly dressed, but she was noticeable. She seemed to catch and hold attention. Her hair was very plentiful and very yellow, and she had small, pretty hands that she used a good deal in a variety of gestures. When Phillip took his seat by her, she gave him one glance that seemed to include not only everything he wore, but everything he thought. She seemed to understand him at once, and being neither inexperienced nor shy herself, she opened the conversation.

"Live here?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Phillip.

"H'm," said the young woman. "Where do you work?"

"I keep books for Jarvis & Co.," Phillip told her with a thrill of pride. "Who are they?" asked the yellow-haired lady.

Phillip was not embarrassed, for she put the question quite casually, but he was startled by her ignorance concerning Jarvis & Co.

"Why—they're a big firm here," he told her; "about the biggest anywhere around."

"I didn't expect much in a place like this," she told him. "Oh, I like the country all right," she added, answering the look of surprise in his eyes, "but it's 'most always pretty dull."

Phillip had never thought of Wimbeldon as country. Country he assumed to be the farmlands and wooded hills that skirted the little town. Wimbeldon he considered a metropolis. He looked at her closely. His eyes lingered on her pretty hair, and she laughed.

"I don't mind being looked at," she said, and Phillip laughed with her. "It's all in my business," she added. She saw the question that flashed through Phillip's mind and answered it. "I'm leading the chorus in the 'Two Brides' Company," she told him, men-

tioning a light opera that was to be given at the local theater that evening. "Are you coming to see us?"

"I don't know," said Phillip. He was very much surprised to find that he was conversing with a real actress; he was even excited.

"You'd better," she said, and then she laughed again, a little, tinkling laugh that made every one who heard it smile in sympathy. "I'm trying to drum up an audience," she explained to the room. "It's fierce to have to sing and dance to the empties."

"It must be hard not to have an audience," said a comfortable matron at one of the little tables. "We are coming to see you, Miss Wilkins."

"Thanks awfully," said Miss Wilkins, smiling delightfully. "Everybody come!" she cried, and waved her little hand in a gesture that included every one.

"What is your part?" asked a thin gentleman from the other side of the table.

"I lead the chorus," said Miss Wilkins, "and I have one song. You'd better come and hear it!"

She shook her finger at the thin gentleman, who couldn't have been kept away from the theater after that. Miss Wilkins was very charming, every one admitted it. She had the quality that, in theatrical parlance, "gets over the footlights." Phillip was quite dazzled by her.

"Do you know," he said to her, growing suddenly and quite unexpectedly confidential, "do you know, I've never been in a theater in my life?"

"Oh, Lord!" replied Miss Wilkins. She recovered from the shock, however, and asked him again to come that evening. "And I'll sing right at you," she said.

One or two other members of the company were staying in the house, but the star had her meals served in her

room, and two men had eaten their dinners earlier, and gone to the theater, so Miss Wilkins represented the theatrical world at that meal.

Phillip went to his room quite bewildered. He parted his hair repeatedly before he could bring it to a state where it gave him approximate satisfaction. He brushed his best suit carefully, and knotted his tie with particular pains. He meditated on the advisability of asking Anice to go with him, but he wanted to be alone. He really didn't want to have his attention distracted from Miss Wilkins, even by Anice.

He reached the theater early, and bought one of the best seats in the house. It happened to be the only one left in that particular row. There were not many people in the house when he entered, and the lights were low. It was a dingy little place on the whole, but it had a glamour for Phillip. He felt that he was entering upon a new life in an unknown world, and he was tingling with excitement.

After a little while the lights were turned higher, and Paul Jarvis came in with his sister and Silvia Colfax and another man, a stranger to Phillip. They had to pass Philip to get to their seats. Miss Jarvis came first and apologized civilly without looking at him. Miss Colfax looked at him with a smile that seemed to radiate a warm, comforting grace.

"I'm sorry," she said as she brushed by.

The stranger passed without a word, but Paul Jarvis stopped to grasp Phillip's hand.

"Hello, Winslow!" he said. "I guess I'm going to sit by you."

A minute later the curtain went up, and there was Miss Wilkins—Polly Wilkins, the program said—and the chorus, singing like so many birds.

Polly won her audience at once. She was full of tricks, a turn of the head or hands, a glance that seemed to in-

clude one personally as if she were letting one into a secret. She was very pretty and graceful, and she was greeted with much applause.

"The Two Brides" was a commonplace musical comedy. Much of the humor was distasteful to Phillip, for while Mrs. Winslow had had little time for training her children in the graces, she had instilled in them a strict sense of morality and honesty. The atmosphere of the home was quarrelsome and untidy, but they were all decent in speech and mind. Polly's speaking part was limited to a few lines, and her song was a love ditty that she had made very popular. Phillip thought her very charming indeed, much more so than the leading lady, a large, vulgar woman who evoked roars of laughter from the audience by jokes few of them would have been willing to repeat on the way home.

Phillip was somewhat bewildered by it all. He was glad he had not asked Anice to come with him. And yet there was Polly, winsome and whole-hearted and bewitching, and by his side Paul Jarvis and his sister and Miss Colfax and the strange gentleman, all laughing heartily and seeming unabashed.

He slipped out as soon as he could after the last curtain. Paul Jarvis called good night to him. Paul was holding Silvia Colfax's wrap. It was a light-colored, satin thing; Phillip had never seen anything like it. It seemed mysterious and wonderful to him. He had seen girls like Silvia Colfax and Miss Jarvis only in street dress, and he had sometimes wondered at their plain coat-and-skirt suits and rough, heelless shoes. Their dress to-night was simple, had he but known, but he could not make the distinction. They wore pale colors and were dainty and fine, and he was impressed.

"There are such a lot of things I don't know," he reflected.





*"I'm in with the management," said Polly, blowing her cigarette smoke across the table, "and I'm in with the dear public."*

#### CHAPTER V.

He met Polly the next morning at breakfast. Two men who belonged to the company were there. Polly twinkled at him.

"I saw you," she exclaimed. "What did you run away for?"

"Maybe he got too much of it," suggested one of the actors. "Rotten show, I call it."

"Oh, come now!" protested Polly.

"I thought it was very nice," said Phillip inadequately.

The two actors smiled good-naturedly, and the one who had not spoken before answered him.

"Of course it's the public we want to please," he said, "so it's good to hear the applause. But, also of course, most of us would like to get out of this slush if we could."

"Why can't you?" asked Phillip.

"Because people like you won't let us," replied the first speaker. "When you make a thing like this a success, why, naturally in a short time there's



going to be another one very much like it. Stop your applause and—out we go! Poof!" and he snapped his fingers.

Phillip was a little bewildered by the responsibility he found thus suddenly thrust upon him. He glanced at Polly, who seemed very self-sufficient, and not at all anxious for his particular approval. He wondered if he ought to explain to this gentleman that last night was his first experience of the theater, but Polly wasn't interested in the discussion and changed the subject for him.

"Why didn't you wait for us?" she asked. "Everybody else did."

Phillip learned that the other people in the house had been more friendly than he.

"I didn't understand—" he faltered.

Polly smiled at him. "I'll forgive you," she said, and a minute later she suggested softly: "Why don't you come on to Peterskill to-night, and see us again? Think you could stand it?"

She felt sorry for him, and was trying to cover his embarrassment. He was amazed by the rapidity with which interest was coming into his life.

"Why, I'd love to," he said.

Peterskill was near enough to Wimbleton for him to make the trip easily.

"I'll be at the Chelsea," said Polly. "I always go to a boarding house when I can in these little places. They're so much nicer than the country hotels."

Phillip approved of this sentiment. The "hotel" in Wimbleton was a place where unwise young men met for carousal, and he instinctively associated evil with hotels. He said, "Oh, yes," to Polly, quite as if he were a person of large experience.

"Then I don't get so thick with the company," continued Polly. "I keep on good terms with everybody, you know, but without kisses."

She was very much amused to see Phillip blush. "If he doesn't look out,

the cows will eat him," she reflected, but she had taken a fancy to him. "He's no fool," she decided; "rather a nice boy, on the whole."

She did not give him much thought; her invitation had been only a kind impulse to give him a chance to regain his composure.

Phillip did not tell Anice about his trip to Peterskill; he did not tell her about Polly. When he went to see his stepmother and the girls, he told them he found the people in the house pleasant and interesting, and he never dreamed that Anice had learned that Polly Wilkins, of whom the local paper spoke with so great admiration, had stayed at Mrs. Dennison's boarding house, while she was in Wimbleton, and that she was waiting, wondering whether Phillip would have anything to say about her. Eva had no such reticence.

"Did you see anything of the 'Two Brides' Company?" she asked.

"Yes," he admitted. "Some of them stayed at Mrs. Dennison's. Miss Lee and Miss Wilkins and two men."

"What are they like?" asked Eva.

"I didn't see Miss Lee," he answered. "She had all her meals in her room. The men were real nice, I thought."

"Is Miss Wilkins as pretty as people say?" Eva pursued the question.

"She's very pretty," said Phillip slowly. "Real pretty and nice. Kind of—" He stumbled a little. "Oh, real sweet and nice—and queer—" He did not find it easy to define Polly's charm. He did not wish to.

"I wish I'd gone to see her," said Eva. "There isn't any reason why we shouldn't go once in a while to see something."

Phillip tried to choose times for his visits to his stepmother when Jim would not be at home. Jim had learned his trade by this time, and had joined the union, where he had at once allied himself with the inflammatory element.

He had much to say about the rights of labor and the selfishness of capitalists. He had learned all the phrases that attach themselves to any movement in which a large number of people are interested, and he could string them together with more or less coherence and much vehemence. The union in Wimbieton was, on the whole, a peaceable, dignified organization, but it was not long before a few egotists who had been before a scattered minority rallied about Jim Peterson, and the band of malcontents began an insidious warfare.

When a man who has bread and butter grows resentful because he has not also jam, the next step is to resent the possession of pots of jam by another man whom he deems no better than himself. Jam, therefore, becomes a war cry, and other folk who have hitherto been content with bread and butter, and occasional feasts with jam, begin to demand unlimited jam as an inalienable right withheld by those individuals who are accustomed to jam. A number of the carpenters employed by Jarvis & Co. decided to strike for higher wages and shorter hours, and Jim was their leader and spokesman.

"Look at those fellows in the office," he cried, "with their clean hands and their fine clothes!"

"Your brother is in there, ain't he?" asked some one.

"And what of that?" asked Jim, as if this very thing were not the root of his discontent. "My brother or yours," he cried grandiloquently, "is he any better than me or you? I'm for the poor man, every time!"

Which sentiment won much applause, for it is a very good sentiment if one can only persuade oneself that poverty is never misguided or mistaken.

Jarvis & Co. met the strikers with unexpected firmness. The union refused its sanction when a council of the leaders was called to give the matter

consideration. Opposition made Jim feel outraged, because he was not capable of meeting argument with argument, so it fell out that he lost on every side, for he and several other men were promptly dismissed, and the rest taken back on sufferance. The real leaders of the union resented Jim's assumption of position among them, and he had been indiscreet in his free criticism of their methods, so he got scant sympathy there. He found employment at a few odd jobs, but nothing regular; and he brooded over his failure and hated Phillip more and more every day.

Phillip did not come into contact with the strikers, for his work was exclusively with the books of the company, but Jim persuaded himself that his own difficulty was the result of a plot, and that his stepbrother had triumphed against him. Phillip did not understand this brooding hatred. He could not guess the working of a mind so wholly unlike his own. He did not see Jim for a number of weeks, during which time he made a trip to New York to see Polly.

"The Two Brides" had appeared in that city, after having been "tried out on the dogs," as Polly put it. Polly had written to Phillip once or twice, gay, innocent, friendly little letters that seemed quite wonderful to him, and that he answered conscientiously. She had sent him picture post cards from various Western cities, and he bought a little album to keep them in. He thought them very interesting.

It was his first visit to New York, and Polly had engaged a room for him in a quiet boarding house, a block or two away from the place where she was staying. With all her freedom of manner, Polly was a circumspect little person, and he had developed a real respect for her.

At his boarding house he found a note from Polly, in which she explained that she could not see him until after

the play in the evening. She told him to come to the stage door and send in his card.

The opera had proved a success, and Polly was bombarded with applause and overwhelmed with flowers. The star was greeted with great roars of laughter and called back after each act, and people went about humming the airs that were sung in the play. Phillip had grown used to the coarse jokes by this time, though he never ceased to wonder why it was people found them so funny. He was interested in the changes that had been made, and was able to talk about them to Polly as he could not have done six months before. He had been reading stage news rather assiduously during that time.

Polly piloted him to a restaurant after the play, and he enjoyed the hour or two they spent there, but he was really frightened when he saw the bill. He thought at first there must be some mistake, but saw at a second glance that the figures were correct. He had gained poise enough to conceal his surprise from Polly, and he paid the waiter without any sign of what was taking place in his mind. Observing this fact, Polly took it for granted that he had plenty of money. If she had understood the truth, she would have planned the rest of his visit on a less expensive scale, so his newly acquired self-control came into play at the wrong moment. He didn't stay in New York very long, because he found he couldn't afford it, but he thought he had never had so good a time before.

The last evening before he left, Polly gave a party after the play. The two men whom Phillip had met in Wimbledon were there, and two young women who had minor parts in the opera; and Polly's landlady, very much pleased to be asked, gave an added touch of dignity to the supper table. Polly had, also, in an unwise moment, asked the star, Miss Lucy Lee, to be one of the

party. Miss Lucy Lee was not at all pleased with the amount of applause Polly was getting. The management had given her a more prominent part in the play, and all the dramatic reviews had mentioned her as a very important part of the production. Miss Lee had been particularly annoyed this evening because once, when she had answered a curtain call alone, some one in the audience had called out for Polly, and others had taken up the cry until Polly, dimpling and fluttering her pretty hands in greeting to the friendly demonstration, had been led forward by the manager himself. She had it in for Polly, to use Polly's own phrase, and she was not further pleased to observe that Phillip did not admire her. Poor Phillip was quite incapable of dissembling.

Miss Lee turned her attention to him this evening. Under pretense of a real interest, she followed question with question, each one designed to bring out his simplicity and inexperience. Polly's eyes began to snap dangerously. She parried thrust after thrust and proved herself a keen opponent, and at last she lost her temper. She was a person of emotions, and in a world where she found few to trust, she was beginning to feel deep satisfaction in the thought that there was one man who was simply and invariably true. Finding now that her smart retorts failed to rebuff Miss Lee, she ventured on the offensive. She lifted from the table a little plate of sugared cakes and held them toward the star with an assumption of apology.

"I don't suppose I ought to offer you sweets," she said, with suspicious gentleness, "but I know you like them."

"And why should you not offer me sweets?" inquired Miss Lee with an asperity that suggested there were subjects better left untouched.

"Why—of course—you're dieting, aren't you?" asked Polly, with just a

little hesitancy, and pretending to be very shy about it.

She did it well enough to deceive Phillip, but one of the young women giggled. Miss Lee kept her temper pretty well, but a few minutes later she arose, murmuring something about another engagement. She stopped to bid Phillip good night, saying that she quite envied him as he went back to the farm. She just doted on rural life, she assured him.

Phillip would have explained that Wimbledon was really quite a large town if she had permitted him, but she did not seem to observe that he was about to reply and started for the door; whereupon Polly, exasperated to the point of daring anything, walked deliberately to the double doors between the dining room and the hall and flung them both open, managing to give the impression that she thought Miss Lee could hardly be expected to get through one of them. It would have made rather a good scene on a stage. Phillip had never ceased to marvel at Polly's ability to convey her meaning without saying anything. She really had the gift of pantomime and she was subtle; she never overdid her acting.

She followed the outraged lady up the stair, protesting her regret at the loss to her party and returned in a few minutes, pirouetting into the room. She sank into a chair next Phillip's.

"Fan me, Phil-lup," she said, drawling. "I feel faint."

"I don't see how you dared!" said one of the girls.

"I'm not afraid of the likes of her," declared Polly. "I'm sorry I asked her to my party, but I guess she's sorry she came; so that's even. Pass the cake, please. I want something to get the taste out of my mouth."

"You'll lose your job," said some one warningly.

"Not on your life!" said Polly.

She laid down the little cake into

which she had bitten, leaned back in her chair, and lighted a cigarette. Phillip had been greatly shocked the first time he had seen her do this, but now it had a charm for him. She was in every way unlike any one he had ever known before, and he was convinced that she was good and sweet at heart. "Actors aren't like other folks," he told himself, answering his own question.

He was hurt and embarrassed by Miss Lee's insolence, but at the same time comforted by Polly's defense of him. He could not think of anything to say. He was not wholly comfortable in the evening dress he had worn so few times.

"I'm in with the management," said Polly, blowing her cigarette smoke across the table, "and I'm in with the dear public."

The landlady was much incensed. She was fond of Polly.

"It's outrageous," she declared. "That old, fat hag! I'm glad you put it up to her, Miss Wilkins."

Polly blew a kiss at her with her pink finger tips. "I've got the last and biggest hunch on her," she said, as gravely as if she were using the best English.

Phillip watched her. He was interested and pleased, even while he was worried because he had spent so much money and hurt by the revelation of his lack of sophistication. He was not in love with Polly; something he did not at this time understand held him from that, though he sometimes wondered why he wasn't. He liked her and he admired her and he was grateful to her. She represented to him all the freedom and the experience and the adventure he had never known. He had never spoken to her of Anice. He wondered what a "hunch" was, and then he heard Polly explaining.

"I'm twenty good years younger than she is," said Polly, "and I've got small

bones." While Phillip's mind groped in the dark for the connection between these statements, Polly proceeded further to enlighten him. "I can stand a lot of fat," said Polly, and she dropped her cigarette and bit into the little cake again.

"I should think you'd be the star," said the landlady admiringly.

Polly looked grave and shook her head. "No," she replied, "I'm afraid it isn't in me." She laid the little cake, with the print of her teeth in it, on the table, and put her pretty hands together while she spoke, almost as if she were talking to herself, Phillip thought. "It's funny," she said, "but I kind of know, some way, that I can't do it. I don't know why. Everybody's like that, I guess. I studied algebra when I was a kid, and most of the problems were like this: something or other plus  $x$  equals something else. You had to find  $x$ . I never could do it. I hated sums."

She lifted a glass of wine and sipped it. "I suppose," she went on slowly, "that everybody's got an  $x$ —an unknown quantity in his problem. It wouldn't be a problem if we hadn't—would it? Don't you see? What you are, plus  $x$ , equals what you'd like to be. Do you know what I'd like to be?"

"A star," cried one or two voices.

"Not on your life!" replied Polly.

"I'd like a little house and a lot of friends—and—and a baby or two, maybe—good ones, you know, that sleep most of the time—and I'd have people come to supper with me." She led the laughter that followed this revelation.

"But do you think I could do it?" Polly continued. "Never in this world we live in! I'd scandalize the neighbors and drop the babies in the cistern and elope with the president of the First National Bank."

There was a bank of that name in Wimbledon, and it took Phillip a minute or two to realize that Polly did not

refer to the staid and respectable gentleman who was its chief official.

"I always seem to be a mile or two behind the joke," he reflected, dissatisfied with himself; but he joined the laughter, and was sorry when the party broke up.

He sent Polly a huge box of flowers before he left the next morning. It was his last extravagance. He thought a good deal about Polly's remark: "What you are, plus  $x$ , equals what you'd like to be."

"I'd be mighty glad to find  $x$ ," he sighed.

He felt more lonely than ever.

## CHAPTER VI.

After some delay and difficulty, Jim found employment in a neighboring town. Mrs. Winslow told Phillip about it when he called one Sunday afternoon, just after he had returned from his trip to New York.

"Jim hasn't paid any board since he lost his job," she said, "so things have been kind of hard. He felt bad and that made him cross. It's awful to say it, but I do think it's better for him to be living somewhere else. He hated everything here so. Maybe he'll be happier there." She tried to speak hopefully.

Phillip was sorry, and said so. He was on very good terms with his step-mother.

"Eva's good," said Mrs. Winslow. "She does all she can, but it's too bad for her not to be having any fun when she's young, and real pretty, too, I think."

Phillip nodded acquiescence. He was thinking of the inroads his trip to New York had made upon his savings. Mrs. Winslow could keep her anxiety secret no longer.

"And Anice coughs so!" she cried, and broke down, sobbing.

Phillip found himself slowly growing



cold. The sensation seemed purely physical. He glanced around the room as if he were looking for a door to close or a window to latch, to shut away an unpleasant draft.

"Has she seen a doctor?" he asked. His voice was hushed to a whisper. He was appalled by the thought that Anice was in danger; Anice, his little play-fellow and confidante. He was thinking rapidly; if it plunged him into debt, Anice must have proper treatment. "She must see a specialist," he said. "Have an examination made. You'll see about it, won't you?" He patted his stepmother's shoulder. "I'll pay for it," he added.

Mrs. Winslow sobbed a little longer.

"Oh, Phip, you're so good!" she said. "I wish I hadn't been so cross sometimes." She was thinking of the days when four little children had tugged at her skirts and four mouths had had to be filled, come what might.

"You weren't cross," Phillip told her, comforting her. "You were just tired out, and worried to death."

"Yes," she assented. "It seems sometimes as if I'd never been anything else but tired out and worried to death. I was kind of a pretty girl," she went on reminiscently, "but I never was a very good manager. I don't know what it is—but there's always been something-sort of keeping me from what I wanted to be."

"What you are, plus x——"

Phillip's lips moved, though he made no sound. Everybody he knew seemed to be in a kind of tangle, held back or interrupted by something, and no one of them comprehending fate; and he was like all the rest.

"I'm beginning to think my x is money," he reflected. "Money certainly does help everywhere, though there are a lot of people who say it doesn't in pretty phrases."

Anice had been out for a little walk. She came in before he left. She was

the type of woman who retains beauty in illness. Her cheeks were touched with a suggestion of the dreaded fever, and her blue eyes were like stars. Phillip always thought Anice's eyes were like stars. They held a spiritual light, a suggestion of depth. She was very thin, and, when she spoke, she was interrupted by a little hacking cough. Phillip felt as if that cough were tearing him to pieces.

"We've been talking about you, dearie," said her mother.

Anice looked quickly from one to the other, and Phillip patted her hand awkwardly.

"We want you to see Doctor Phillipson," he said, mentioning a prominent physician in a near-by city. "We want to see if he can't stiffen you up a little."

He tried to speak lightly, but he could feel Anice's fingers tighten a little around his. She smiled at him bravely.

"Isn't that pretty expensive, Phip?" she asked.

"Darn the expense!" replied Phillip, and they all laughed as people do when the opportunity comes after a tension.

Mrs. Winslow begged Phillip to stay for supper, and started her preparation, although it was early. She wanted to be busy. She left Phillip and Anice together. Anice watched her go out of the room, and listened until she knew her mother could not hear what they were saying. Then she laid her hand on Phillip's arm.

"I know, Phip," she said.

Anice wasn't a little girl any more. She seemed to glorify the poor little home like some exquisite blossom on an ugly cactus plant. She seemed unearthly sweet to Phillip.

"We're going to help you," he declared. "They do such wonderful things now, you know," he added hopefully.

"May be," said Anice. "You're such a dear, Phip!" And then: "Did you





*He had laid the book by with a swift impulse to take her hand between his own, but Anice had looked up to see why he had stopped reading, and her manner had checked him.*

have a good time in New York? Tell me about it."

The question was not quite like Anice and embarrassed him for a moment. The wonders he had seen passed in a glittering review before his mind. He told Anice carefully some of his experiences and found himself ashamed and baffled by his reluctance to tell her the whole. But he succeeded in diverting her, and they were chattering gayly when Eva came in.

Eva had improved very much, both

in appearance and manner, he thought. Responsibility had given her dignity, and she was tenderly solicitous for her sister. She was a far better manager than her mother, and it had always been hard for her to be patient with shiftlessness. She was fretted by discomforts she knew were avoidable, and this probably accounted for much of her temper as a child. As she had grown older, she had taken some things into her own hands, greatly to the advantage of the household. When she was

told that Anice was to see Doctor Philipson, she replied promptly:

"That's what I've been wishing for six months. I wanted mother to take up a small mortgage on the house."

"I'm so afraid of mortgages," whimpered Mrs. Winslow, who had returned to the front room that now served as a living room and dining room.

"I would have gone to the bank and explained everything," said Eva. "The interest on five hundred dollars wouldn't be much, and if we lost the whole house, what's that to having Anice well? Look how much money you and mother have paid out on that worthless old land up in Minnesota!" Eva spoke contemptuously.

"Clifford always thought that was a very good investment," said Mrs. Winslow ineffectually.

It startled Phillip a little to hear his father spoken of. He had almost forgotten about the land in Minnesota.

"Wouldn't it be funny if anything did ever come of that?" he said, and laughed a little. "I'd rather hate to give it up now. It's like a friend of my childhood. When I began to realize what it really was, I felt like a kid that has just learned the truth about Santa Claus."

He saw that the argument troubled Anice and turned the conversation to other matters. He lay awake long into the night, thinking and planning and remembering. He remembered all sorts of little things that belonged to his childhood. He recalled the blue-eyed little girl who had come toward him dragging her stubby little toes in hesitating embarrassment, while she had offered him a battered old tin horse to play with when his father had brought him for the first time to the new home. Anice had offered friendship promptly; she had been a singularly sympathetic child, and she had seemed to divine at once how hard it was for him to meet the noisy, quarrelsome group on equal

terms. He and Anice had discovered all sorts of little ways of avoiding the older children; they had had secret places where they had hidden their treasures, and secret signals by which they had communicated with each other. He remembered how he had thought at once of telling Anice when he had heard he was to have a place in the office of Jarvis & Co.

Well, here he was now, a trusted clerk with Jarvis & Co., but he did not feel as he had thought he would. Before he fell asleep, he had a vision of the little boy who used to linger before the office windows and feel, at the same time that he was deeply shocked, a real envy of the office boy's facility in facial contortion.

## CHAPTER VII.

In the morning, a letter from Polly waited by his plate at breakfast. It was a merry letter, and he smiled over it. She told him of her latest encounter with Miss Lee. Miss Lee had been changing the jokes in her part, as was often done, to create new interest; and she had found one that related to the superabundance of false hair so common among women of the day. She had delivered this witticism directly at Polly, who had been on the stage at the time; unwisely, for she had failed to reckon with her adversary's wit.

Polly had pretended to be very much embarrassed, hiding her face and expressing her chagrin in pantomime, and then, when Polly came front for her dance, she had pulled the pins from her hair slowly, one at a time, throwing them to the audience, who had laughed and applauded and scrambled for them. At last Polly's wonderful hair had enshrouded her. It was glorious hair, and the result of Miss Lee's jest had been call after call for Polly, and notices in all the papers the next morning. Polly wrote Phillip how she had gone to

Miss Lee, and thanked her sweetly for the opportunity for such an effective bit of work. With the frankness that still bewildered Phillip, Polly wrote:

She didn't burst, because she was wearing her new corset, and it's a grand one for fat folks.

How far apart they seemed—the world in which Polly lived and the world that Anice knew! And he seemed to be between them, nearer to Anice, without doubt, but drawn, as the little boy had been, by the vision of brighter, bigger, more alluring things; things he was beginning to feel he might enter into and share.

He telephoned to Doctor Phillipson and made an appointment for Anice. He suggested that Eva should go with her sister, feeling that Eva would get the physician's opinion more clearly than Mrs. Winslow, who often became confused under emotion. So Eva got permission from her employer, who was sympathetic, and they went, mother and daughters, to learn Anice's fate.

Phillip found that day very long, and he was only faintly comforted when evening came. Doctor Phillipson had said he could not tell the exact condition until the customary examinations had been made, the result of which could not be known for several days. He said that Anice required care, and that he would prescribe a treatment later. Anice was exhausted by the strain of the day, but she waited until Phillip came that evening, and greeted him gayly when he arrived.

"Such a day, Phip!" she said. "And such a funny old man as he is! It was none of your 'put-out-your-tongue-and-let-me-feel-your-pulse' conversations. No, indeed! He looked like a little old owl—a very old owl, Phip—and he thumped me, and pounded me, and poked me, until I thought maybe we'd made a mistake, and got into a prize fighter's office, instead of a doctor's. Do prize fighters have offices, Phip?"

"He was probably trying to pound some sense into you," said Phillip, laughing, as he knew she wished him to. "But you must be awfully tired. What are you staying up for? It's late for little girls."

"She wouldn't go to bed until she had seen you," said Mrs. Winslow. "Please go now, Anice. Doctor Phillipson said she ought to rest a good deal."

"Oh, I'll rest," Anice assured them. "Good night, Phip. Good night, good night," to her mother and Eva. "I'm not as tired as you think," she insisted. They heard her singing softly as she went up the stairs.

"Sometimes I think she don't understand at all," whispered Mrs. Winslow.

"I hope she doesn't," replied Phillip.

They did not know that she hid her face in her pillow, and choked back the frightened sobs that rose from her heart. She lay still a little while, and then crept out of bed, and took a little photograph of Phillip from its place on the mantelshelf. She lay with it against her cheek for a long time. How could Phillip know that?

Mrs. Winslow shut the door softly, so that Anice should not hear their voices. She was weary and anxious, and Eva, alert and nervous, was sharp of tongue, contradicting or correcting her mother until Mrs. Winslow lapsed into a sulky silence, and let Eva tell of the day. Eva was accurate and concise, qualities Mrs. Winslow could never achieve. Eva felt that they were started on the right track, and that that was all they had any right to expect so far.

"It should have been done some time ago," she said.

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What we want is to find out what to do about it."

Phillip went home to spend an anxious night. He knew that, whatever Doctor Phillipson's verdict might be, there would be some rather heavy expense involved. He calculated how he would be able to meet them. He considered the advisability of going back to board with his stepmother, now that Jim was no longer there, but found that he shrank from the idea. He had grown accustomed to the order of a well-managed house, and to the freedom of his position.

He thought about Polly, and wondered when he should be able to see her again. He was afraid it would be a long time. Then he remembered that he had not answered her last letter. He had waited a little longer than usual this time, and he wondered if Polly had thought about it or cared. He slept restlessly and woke early, and he wrote to Polly before breakfast, and told her of his anxiety about Anice:

She is such a sweet, pretty child, and so good always. It's hard to understand why she should have to suffer. She used to be real strong, but lately she has seemed so tired all the time.

He did not for an instant imagine that Polly might take the word "child" literally. They were accustomed to thinking and speaking of Anice as the baby of the family.

Polly read his letter with a touch of emotion. It was the first time Phillip had ever asked sympathy of her, and she was pleased and gratified in some way she did not quite understand.

"Poor little kid!" she whispered.

She answered Phillip's letter at once and told him of a sanitarium she knew about in Colorado Springs. They accepted only incipient cases, she explained, and everybody said they did wonders.

Polly's letter was comforting, and Phillip wanted sympathy, but he kept

wondering what the expense would be. Doctor Phillipson's report came a day or two after Polly's letter. He wrote cheerfully:

Incipient; merely a touch. No reason at all why the patient should not recover with proper treatment.

Then his part was done, but the "proper treatment" unrolled a long column of figures before Phillip's eyes and set him to computing a very difficult sum.

They had several very unpleasant conferences. Mrs. Winslow considered Phillip's resources illimitable, and apparently had no scruple about accepting his aid; but Eva, whose head was clearer, did sums in the night, and was less willing.

"He'll be wanting to marry, the first thing we know," she said, "and we have no right to let him put himself in a position where he can't."

This suggestion alarmed Mrs. Winslow, and it required some patience and assurance on Eva's part to allay the suspicion thus aroused. Eva presented the matter to Phillip directly, and although he protested, he was secretly relieved when Mrs. Winslow reluctantly consented to a small mortgage on the house.

"If we get stuck, Phip can help us," said Eva, and Phillip promised gladly, and said he would interview the necessary persons. Eva was cross when her mother thanked him lugubriously, and said it was hard to get along without a man.

"It's very good of Phip, and I'm glad he's here to be interested with us," said Eva, "but you needn't tell me I couldn't manage it myself, for I could."

"Yes, Eva, I think you could," said Phillip.

"Well, I'm mighty glad to have you here, Phip," said Eva, more gently. "You are no end of a comfort, and I don't want you to think I'm ungrateful, but mother makes me so cross!" She



sighed a little. "You may hear me calling for hul-lup," she added, turning her sigh into a smile.

The expression made him think of Polly, and he found now that whenever he thought of Polly he was rather sad, because it seemed as if something very gay and pleasant and happy were being taken out of his life. He had sent for a circular of the sanitarium Polly had mentioned, and he found it very expensive. But he made some inquiry, and heard tales of healing that stirred him.

"I know about that place," said Paul Jarvis. "They won't take a case unless they believe there's a chance for a complete cure. Of course they don't always do it, but the proportion is remarkable."

Phillip found Paul Jarvis unexpectedly sympathetic and interested, and he was grateful for this, remembering oddly the reverence he used to feel for old Mr. Jarvis' grandson. When Phillip mentioned the expense, Paul did not quite seem to understand.

"Oh, yes," he said, "it's a pretty expensive business, but the cheaper places are so dreary. I believe more tuberculosis patients die of homesickness than anything else."

This sentence lingered in Phillip's mind. He worked mechanically, with a sense of weight on his heart. He was deeply touched by Paul's friendliness. He was calculating everything now. He added his responsibilities and his resources and found himself counting the number of his friends. A short time ago he had felt very much alone, but now he was sure he had two friends. Paul Jarvis and Polly Wilkins were both affectionately interested and concerned.

"I can make friends," he thought; "it seems to be money I need."

He thought about money most of the time, but he was a little comforted by the consciousness that he could win

friendship. He had thought at one time that he lacked some necessary quality that makes human relations near and sweet.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Phillip's acquaintance with Paul Jarvis ripened fast. They were working together now, in charge of all the final accounts of the firm. Phillip was at the head of this department, verifying all the books and passing them to Paul, who attended to the banking business and signed all the checks for the company. They were together most of the day in a room that had been prepared for them, and Paul began to include Phillip in his plans outside of the office. He told Phillip of his engagement to Silvia Colfax, who was now in Europe. They were waiting until he had a little more money, he explained, and Phillip understood this as he could not have a short time before.

Paul took Phillip to the country club, where Phillip learned to play golf and found himself, in a short time, on good terms with a number of men he had not met before. Phillip was at this time a young man of rather interesting appearance; his grave manner was dignified, and his shyness gave an impression of pleasing reserve. He was never awkward, and some of the women at the club began to cultivate him. All this was pleasant, but he did not feel he could afford the membership fee and finally told Paul so, explaining his circumstances more fully than he had before. Paul tried to assure him that he was welcome as a guest, but his pride rebelled at this. He liked the club and he liked the people he met there, and he tried very hard not to feel sorry he could not join.

Several weeks passed, during which Anice slept on a porch they had made

ready for her, and ate such food as had been advised, and they all waited in that curious hope people have that something will present itself to relieve a difficulty. Eva fretted under the indecision; she would have chosen what seemed the best of the places possible for them to consider and have packed Anice off forthwith. But Mrs. Winslow temporized and made vague, formless, impossible suggestions; and Phillip, torn by his desire to offer Anice the best, was willing to postpone a poorer choice for a time. He soon realized the danger of this, however, and began to agree with Eva.

He was talking with Paul Jarvis one evening as they were returning from the golf links. He had told Paul that he felt they should not delay longer, but should take definite action at once, and after a little Paul returned confidence for confidence.

"I'm worried about my sister, too," he said. And then he told Phillip of Ethel Jarvis' engagement to Mr. Henry Hampton, who was the strange gentleman Phillip had seen in the theater with Paul and his sister and Miss Colfax the first time he had seen Polly on the stage. He had seen Mr. Hampton more than once since, but had not met him.

"Ethel's all right," Paul explained with brotherly frankness, "but she's a bit daffy about position, you know."

Phillip nodded, as if the subject had always been quite comprehensible to him, although the idea that a Jarvis could aspire to anything higher than a Jarvis would have startled him a few years before.

"You don't like Hampton?" he asked.

"Cad," replied Paul briefly. "Old family; rotten. It makes me sick."

Phillip did not reply at once, and they walked a little way in silence, then Paul continued the subject.

"His sister married a divorced duke

—horrid story. He's a bounder. They live in England, and she has made a sort of success—you know the kind." Phillip didn't know, but refrained from saying so. "She's a vulgar sort," said Paul, "but fetching—sporty and smart and all that sort of thing. She's made a social success—after a fashion; name in the papers, you know, and gowns described. It's gone right to Ethel's head, and the mater hasn't much more sense about it. Hampton's in Europe now. I wish he'd stay there!"

They were talking earnestly, engrossed in their own affairs, when a man passed them. It was Jim Peterson, slouching along with his hands in his pockets and a soft hat pulled well down over his eyes. Neither Phillip nor Paul looked up to see who it was. Paul was walking with one hand laid affectionately on Phillip's shoulder, and both young men were carrying bags of golf sticks. Phillip was using some that had belonged to Paul's father.

Jim hurried by them. He knew that Phillip had not seen him, but he hated Phillip for not looking, and soon persuaded himself that Phillip had not wanted to see him, had not been willing to recognize him while in Paul Jarvis' company. He turned the matter in his mind and brooded upon it.

When he reached home, he found his mother full of her troubles, and inclined to be reproachful because he was not helping at all. She said the most unwise thing she could have thought of, and compared his neglect of his people with Phillip's kindness. Jim left her with an oath, and Eva came home to find her quite hysterical, and was angry with both Jim and her mother.

Phillip came in later unexpectedly, and had the most uncomfortable interview he had ever had. He went home feeling desperately that something



*Polly was not quite what Anice had expected to find a successful vaudeville actress, and Anice did not look as ill as Polly had thought she might.*

must be decided at once. Anice had gone to bed, for she had not been expecting him, and he tried to go out softly, so that he would not disturb her. He could hear her coughing, and the sound stayed with him all night. She was lying very still, trying not to cough, and holding his picture in her thin hands close against her breast.

Jim left his mother in a rage. He went doggedly along the street, with his head down and the rough hat pulled over his eyes. There were few people

in the streets, and no one recognized him. He passed the offices of Jarvis & Co. The offices were at the front of the place. Farther back on the property were the factories. The grounds were large, and surrounded by a high wooden fence he had helped to build. He hated the place as the visible sign of his defeat; he hated it as the sign of Phillip's success. He had a picture of Paul Jarvis, with one hand resting familiarly on Phillip's shoulder.

He could think of nothing he dared

do to express his hatred of it all, until his hand, thrust deep in his pocket, touched a box of matches there. He drew it out and looked at it for a minute, glancing around to see if any one were near. He saw no one, so he lighted the matches, one after another, and threw them over the fence as he went along. He knew that the watchman had been by at eight, and would not make his next round until nine o'clock. He had thirty minutes to spare.

He was alarmed when he had finished, and hurried to the railroad station, where he bought a ticket for New York. He caught a train that was just leaving. He had heard that a contractor for whom he had once worked had been placed in charge of some city buildings there, and he hoped to find employment. But as he was crossing the street, after leaving the station at New York, he was run down by a taxicab and injured so that he had to be taken to a hospital. There he was kept for several weeks, and during the first part of that time he was unable to see the daily papers, so he did not learn what had happened at home. When he was discharged, he went to the contractor, who gave him work at once. Mrs. Winslow made one or two ineffectual attempts to find him, but he seemed to have disappeared from the face of the earth.

Most of the matches he threw over the fence went out before they fell to the ground. One or two burned their length or smoldered a little, but one fell on a pile of shavings left by a careless workman. This blazed for a minute, and then the flame died down. It did not go out, however. It crept through the dried grass—for the country had suffered drought—and reached a little vine against the foundation of the building, a little, dried vine that had lately died of thirst. An

hour later, the offices of Jarvis & Co. were in ruins.

The next morning Phillip and Mrs. Winslow both received letters telling them that coal had been found on the tract of land in Minnesota that Clifford Winslow had bought twenty-five years ago. A mine had been opened about a quarter of a mile away, and had been traced to cover the whole property. A company that was already interested offered them ten million dollars for all rights.

## CHAPTER IX.

"He isn't putting on any airs at all," said Polly, cocking her head like a saucy sparrow. She was sitting with Phillip at a small table in a fashionable restaurant. She turned to him and laughed mischievously. "No, Phil-lup," she said. "There's nobody behind you. I'm just talking to myself."

"I'd hate to have you think I was silly about it," said Phillip.

Polly's eyes grew soft. "You will never be spoiled," she said. "It can't be done. You're too good for this wicked world, Phil-lup. The first thing you know, you'll be translated. I can see the headlines in the papers the next morning: 'He was too good to live!'"

"I've got to go home to-morrow, you know," he announced. "I have run away to get here at all."

"It was awfully good of you," said Polly soberly. "I was so glad when I heard they would take your sister. You know that means a good deal in that place; it means she has a fair chance to get well."

"I know," he assented, and then: "I was so surprised at the way she took it. You know she hasn't always seemed to understand; we thought sometimes that she didn't know how ill she was. But when the word came

that Doctor Stevens would take her, she broke down and cried and cried." Phillip's voice shook a little. "It broke me all up," he said.

"Poor little kid!" murmured Polly sympathetically.

"And now mother and Eva can go with her," Phillip continued. "So she won't be lonesome."

"I'm so glad," said Polly again.

Everything Phillip had said confirmed her impression that Anice was a little girl. After a while Polly spoke of her own affairs. She told him that "The Two Brides" was going to London in September for a six weeks' season.

"And I'm very much afraid we'll walk home," she said. "London won't stand for us, Phil. I'm blue! I'm scared to go. And—and now you're so rich and fine, I'm scared about you, too."

She laughed as soon as she had spoken, and he comforted her by laughing with her at the very idea of being too rich and fine for her. She returned to the London venture.

"Do you know," she said, "I've got cold feet about this? London will never stand for Lucy. This whole bunch is American, and we all talk American."

"What's the matter with Americans?" asked Phillip.

"Nothing in the world," declared Polly. "Only in England you've got to be just like the English. It's nothing on us," she explained earnestly; "it's on them! They just sit back and describe themselves. 'If you aren't like that,' they say, 'Heaven help you!'"

Phillip did not understand, but he smiled, and Polly rattled on:

"The big companies, you know, all study and get wise. They blur their vowels all up and get throaty, and then the dear Londoners say: 'How very remarkable! You are almost like

us!'" She sighed. "I'm doing a lot of thinking, Phil-lup."

"I wish I could help you," he said.

"Of course you do, angel," she replied. "Let's go home. It's getting late for little girls and boys."

He saw her again at her boarding house the next morning, before he went to his train. He had been wakeful in the night, thinking of his friends. He thought of Anice, whose sudden breaking down at the word of hope had moved him strangely. When they had told her that Doctor Stevens thought she might be perfectly well again, she had turned from him to her mother, in whose embrace she had wept. She had seemed to slip away from him in some indefinable way. He had missed something he had always found in Anice before. He kept telling himself that she would be herself again soon; that he would be able to meet her and jest with her and pet her just as he always had. Yet wherever he was, whatever he was doing, this little, subtle change in Anice thrust itself upon his consciousness and troubled him vaguely.

He thought, too, about Paul Jarvis, who was under an inexorable law that made his progress in the affairs of the business just what his grandfather decreed. Paul was deeply in love and anxious to marry, but could not lift a finger to change his situation. It might be several years before old Mr. Jarvis would make his income adequate to support a girl like Silvia Colfax, who had been reared to helplessness.

He thought of Polly, troubled and alone, so plucky and sweet in that strange world of hers.

"I'm worried about everybody," he concluded. "And in ways that money doesn't seem to help. I haven't found my x yet."

Polly was to sail in a week, and he would probably not be able to see her.



again before that, though he wanted to get down again and told her so.

"Oh, I don't know," said Polly wearily. "I hate saying good-by." She brightened again quickly, as she had a way of doing. "That's very original of me, Phil-lup; most people love it. 'Good-by! good-by! Come and see us, John!'"

She ran through a burlesque scene that made Phillip laugh in spite of himself. He took her hands in his suddenly.

"Will you marry me, Polly?" he asked.

"No, Phil," said Polly, backing away from him and laughing still, but with a frightened look in her eyes.

"Why not, Polly?" he urged.

"Because I like you far too well," she told him. She had recovered her poise. She pushed him away from her. "I don't think I'd like Reno, Phil-lup, and either you or I would be there in about six months."

She talked too fast for him; he could not argue with her, for his wit was not quick enough to distinguish between her serious moments and her moments of tender raillery.

"No," she insisted, "you never could stand me in the world, dear boy. Really, you couldn't. And maybe I couldn't stand you! I wasn't made to fit the rural community, Phil dear. I like the world—the whole, big world. I love it—and when all's said and done you'll go back to Homeburg."

"Think about it," he argued.

"I'll think about it if you'll promise not to," promised Polly. "A bargain? It must be. Don't think about it, Phil. Yes, I'll write you lots, but please don't come to see me sail. I don't want anybody there."

She hurried him off, and he went reluctantly, but Polly's keen eyes saw that he was not deeply disappointed.

"He's lonesome; that's what's the matter with him," she thought. "I

hope nobody snaps him up. I'll write and warn him about cats."

Polly hummed a little tune as she got ready to go out. She put a bit of powder on her nose and rubbed it delicately, adjusted her veil, and set out to the nearest subway station.

"Mind your step! Mind your step!" droned the guard monotonously.

"Oh, shut up!" thought Polly spitefully. "As if I weren't minding my steps all the time!"

A man of a type the world could very well get along without brushed against her as she stood in the aisle, his leering eyes fixed on her yellow hair.

"Excuse me, miss," he said.

"No," snapped Polly, "I won't. If you can't learn to walk, you ought to get a nurse."

The heterogeneous company along each side of the car smiled or laughed aloud according to their kind. The offender vanished hastily into another car, and some one offered Polly a seat. She sat there primly, thinking long thoughts.

As she left the subway, she noticed a church on the corner. The doors were open wide, and a sign at the door announced a brief noonday service. Polly went in, led by some impulse she made no effort to resist or to understand. She slipped into a pew at the rear of the church, and, laying her arms on the back of the seat in front of her, she buried her face in her hands. She knelt through the whole service: hymns, prayers, and a short sermon. The clergyman saw her and tried to reach her after the benediction, but she had hurried out, and was not in sight when he reached the door.

## CHAPTER X.

After his stepmother and her daughters had started for Colorado Springs, Phillip was haunted by the



picture Anice had made at the last moment. She had worn a pretty blue gown—a simple traveling dress, but better made than anything else he had ever seen her wear—and the color seemed to bring out the unusual blue of her eyes. Her eyes were like chicory flowers, he thought. Her face was a little flushed, as was often the case when she was excited, and she did not look so very ill for the moment. She stood on the platform of the car and looked down at him, and he was suddenly very reluctant to have her go away from him. He did not remember ever having felt just that way before.

She smiled at him brightly as the train moved away, but there was a detachment about her that gave him a curious little pang. He could not say just why, but he thought that she had never seemed so near to him, and at the same time so far away. For the first time he compared her with Polly. She had not so much style as Polly, he decided, but more charm. Then he was dissatisfied with this conclusion because he remembered he had always thought Polly so charming. He wondered what Polly would think of her, and what she would think of Polly.

He seemed to miss Anice everywhere. The thought kept coming to him that he would go around to see them all in the evening, and then he would remember that they were no longer in the old home. He was working at the books of Jarvis & Co. He and Paul were spending most of their time trying to bring order out of the chaos the fire had effected.

He had promised Mrs. Winslow to make another effort to find Jim, and put an advertisement in all the papers he could reach by the Associated Press. The notice, however, was unfortunately worded, and when Jim saw it, he imagined that Jarvis & Co. were trying to find him because he had

set their place on fire. He did not hear about the money. One of his fellow workmen saw the notice and called his attention to it, but he laughed and said that his name was not Peterson, but Peters, and in a short time he came to be known by his associates as Jim Peters. So Phillip found no trace of him. Mrs. Winslow grieved about it.

"It don't seem as if Jim cared about us any more," she said.

"I don't think he ever did care much," said Eva. "Don't let Anice know you feel bad about it."

They tried to keep Anice from worry at every point. She was a good patient, and did all she was told to do without question. Doctor Stevens, in whose care she was, was reticent about her. Mrs. Winslow thought him indifferent, but Eva wrote characteristically to Philip:

He doesn't dare say much, because people hang on every word so. It must be dreadful to have to be so careful. He has told me not to be discouraged if Anice doesn't seem to gain at once, and that sometimes the patient will gain a good deal at first and then lose strength after a while. When mother tries to make him commit himself, he only says: "We must wait, Mrs. Winslow. You must have patience." I wish I could buy some at the drug store and administer it. When you write to her, please tell her not to bother Doctor Stevens with questions. She pays more attention to you than she does to any one else. He is pretty patient, but I can see she bothers him.

"I hope she doesn't bother Anice," Phillip thought, and when he wrote to Mrs. Winslow, he cautioned her against letting Anice see any anxiety she might feel. He thought a good deal about Anice. He sent her books and magazines and ordered flowers for her. He was trying very hard to get back into the old relation with her, but Anice did not seem to respond. She wrote him gay letters, thanking him for his gifts, and telling him interesting bits of news about the patients or the doctors or the nurses; but Phillip

put every letter down with a feeling of dissatisfaction. He was looking for something Anice did not offer him; he could not have said just what it was.

The work over the books for Jarvis & Co. proved arduous for a time. Phillip and Paul worked day and night, putting together fragments, looking over old letters and charred fragments of papers. They were unable to account for a sum of money amounting to several thousand dollars. They made their computations separately, and both came to the same conclusions. They calculated, and conferred, and considered, and finally began to suspect the clerk who passed the accounts into Phillip's hands. Paul spoke of it first.

"I wonder if Wharton could explain this," he said, and the expression on Phillip's face proved that the thought had crossed his mind.

"I don't see just how he has done it," Paul continued. "When did you look over his books last?"

"The last part of June," said Phillip. "They were all right then."

"There's been a pile of money through his hands since then," said Paul. "August is usually dull, but this year we had the Caramba matter and the Beston & Welds contract. Let me see—Caramba—twenty-six thousand, four hundred, and fifty—Beston—thirteen thousand, five hundred, and fifty—"

"Forty thousand," said Phillip. "Yes, and we've only got thirty-six thousand, five hundred."

They looked at one another. Phillip remembered the days when he first came to stand at the high shelf in the main office of Jarvis & Co. Ralph Wharton had been rather unkind then, unkind in ways that Phillip had not wholly understood until he was in a position where the slights and snubs could no longer touch him. Paul remembered, too.

"Wharton always was a cad!" he exclaimed impatiently. "He's been pretty slick about this. He may not have meant it, but if it hadn't been for this fire—it might have looked —" He paused and Phillip realized how it might have looked. Paul smiled grimly. "It might have looked as if you or I had had something to do with it," he ended.

While they spoke, there came a sound of some one stumbling at the door, a fumbling at the latch, and then Ralph Wharton burst into the room. He was unkempt; his eyes were wild.

"I had to come!" he cried. "I had to come! I've got to face the music!"

Paul stood watching him in silence, but Phillip offered him a chair.

"We know," said Phillip gently. "Don't look like that. We are your friends."

Ralph Wharton's eyes gleamed strangely, then he caught his breath.

"I knew you'd find it out," he said. "I kept saying to myself: 'They're coming to it! They're coming to it! Now they've found it!'"

He seemed out of breath as if he had been running; he shivered as if he were cold.

"You meant to put it back, didn't you?" asked Phillip.

"God knows I did!" groaned the young man. "I thought I had a sure thing."

"That'll be all right," said Phillip. "I'll put it back for you, and no one else need know anything about it. Don't worry. You can pay me back when you can, as you can. It's all right. Start over again and cut out gambling—Wall Street and every other kind."

Paul stood watching them curiously. Ralph Wharton rose and stood before Phillip. He was trembling, and when he spoke, his voice came in a whisper.

"Do you mean that?" he asked slowly.

Phillip nodded. "Cut out the gambling," he said again. "Will you?"

"Will I?" groaned the young man. "Will I? I've been in hell, I tell you, in hell!" He walked across the room and stood with his back toward them. "I thought I could put it back," he said. "I don't know what made me do it——"

"The unknown quantity," said Phillip; "pressure and opportunity and then action. You yield at such a point——another man at another point——God only knows where any of us will yield—or to what—— Don't tell the girl."

Ralph started and flushed. "I must," he said hoarsely.

Paul still watched silently, and Phillip spoke again. Phillip remembered something Polly had said to him once, and his last speech to Ralph Wharton was a quotation.

"Half the confessions in the world are made in the wish to be comforted," he said. "If it's anything she would ever have to meet, it would be different, but this is dead. Don't dig up a skeleton because it would relieve your mind a little. It's a good deal harder sometimes to keep still than it is to talk; and the woman forgives—and remembers."

Wise little Polly! She saved one woman many a pang.

Ralph turned to Paul. "Of course I'll resign my position," he said. "I guess I can find something else to do."

Paul did not reply at once; he was weighing his own responsibility in the matter.

"No," he said at last. "I guess Mr. Winslow is right. The thing is dead unless you dig it up and try to revive it. You've had your lesson; now see what you can do for yourself—and the girl." He smiled a little and then grew grave again. "We won't spy

upon you. We'll just let it go and trust you."

The young man sank into a chair by the table and, burying his face in his hands, sobbed aloud.

Later, when they were alone together, Paul looked at Phillip curiously.

"You were worried about money a little while ago," he said, "but you didn't try to get it this way."

"I didn't think of it," said Phillip simply. "That's another x, Paul. Why should Wharton think of it when I didn't? Is it because I'm always a little slow about things?"

## CHAPTER XI.

Ralph Wharton, having been through the flames, gave himself wholly to his work, and did so well that his efforts were soon recognized. He accorded Phillip a doglike devotion that Phillip found rather embarrassing. Phillip was so unaccustomed to affection that any expression of it moved him deeply, even uncomfortably. He was rather popular with Paul's friends, and would have been very happy at this time if he had not been so concerned about Anice. This was an undercurrent to everything else that came into his life. He was disappointed in every letter that came from her. He was constantly more worried, too, as neither her mother nor Eva reported any improvement in her condition. He felt an unreasonable impatience with her physician.

"The man ought to be doing something!" he told himself, although he recognized his own foolishness as he did so, and was assailed by a horrid fear.

As their work on the books neared completion, old Mr. Jarvis called Paul and Phillip into his private office one day and explained to them the details of a matter in London that required



*"Such a queer-looking man!" she exclaimed. Phillip turned, and they both saw Jim open the second door at his left.*

the attention of the company. He told them that he planned to send Paul over there for a number of years and asked Phillip to go with him to attend to some financial aspect of the matter and to return with a report. The arrangement would make Paul's marriage an immediate possibility, and Paul knew that Silvia's mother would be pleased at the prospect of having her daughter stay in London, where she preferred to live. He hastened

out to send a cablegram announcing his coming.

Phillip was eagerly interested in Paul's happiness, and deeply moved and pleased by old Mr. Jarvis' confidence. He retained much of his old veneration for the firm, and he admired the stern, haughty old man, while he recognized the militant, cold quality of his genius. He was very well pleased to be chosen as the trusted representative of Jarvis & Co., though

he smiled as he remembered his own amazement when Polly had asked: "Who are they?" the first time he had seen her at Mrs. Dennison's boarding house.

All his interest and pleasure, however, were pierced by a literal pain at the thought of going so far from Anice, though but for a short time. He found that this regret was permeating every other feeling, and he planned to go out to Colorado to see her before he sailed.

He was so full of this that he was startled to hear Miss Ethel Jarvis read aloud Polly's name from an evening paper a servant had brought in. He was dining informally with Paul's people, as had become a pleasant custom with him, and had come to be on very friendly terms with Miss Ethel Jarvis. He knew that her engagement was to be announced at Christmas, when Henry Hampton would return to America. The wedding was being arranged for early spring, and Paul was greatly distressed about it.

Miss Jarvis glanced over the first page of the paper, and then looked up at her brother and Phillip, who were standing by the fireplace.

"Do you remember," she asked, "that cunning little Polly Wilkins who danced in the 'Two Brides' Company?"

"Why, yes," replied her brother. "What about her?"

Phillip waited, tingling a little. Polly had seemed very far away of late. He had been so busy; he had felt so much. When the London project had been suggested, his first thought had been that he should see her, but now his mind was more on Colorado Springs than on London. He remembered Polly's fear that "The Two Brides" would meet trouble in London. "Just listen to this," said Ethel Jarvis, and she read aloud.

"The Two Brides," presented by an American company, were shipwrecked on a

sea of booing at Her Majesty's Theater last night. The opera will not be sung again."

Phillip's heart sank. He wondered whether he could send a draft to Polly. He wondered whether she would accept it if he did. He felt that he couldn't let her be stranded in a strange land.

Miss Jarvis read on:

"Only one thing saved the company from utter rout: Miss Polly Wilkins was called upon for her well-known song, 'I'll Love You If You'll Love Me,' early in the first act, by the distracted management, this song having proved one of the most popular features in America. Miss Wilkins, who is petite, pretty, and charming, came forward and delivered her ditty with an affectation of a British accent that brought down the house. She was recalled eleven times, and while the miserable farce dragged on, greatly cut at that, Miss Wilkins appeared frequently with extra songs. Miss Wilkins' representation of an American girl trying to speak with a British accent is one of the funniest things of the season, and a play is being rapidly prepared in which it can be used to advantage. In the meanwhile, Miss Wilkins has received a flattering offer from one of our best music halls."

"Isn't she clever?" exclaimed Miss Jarvis.

"Isn't it just like her?" said Phillip.

He sent a cable to Polly congratulating her, and received a letter from her just as he was starting for Colorado Springs about ten days later. He read the letter on the train. Polly wrote:

Thank you for your kind words. But isn't it fun, Phil-lup? Think of Polly as a star! Twinkle—twinkle—— But I'm sort of scared, too. If I can only keep it up! I used to think I'd be the happiest thing on earth if I could only be a real star, and now I'm scared to death at the idea that maybe I'm only a rocket, after all.

"How queer it all is!" thought Phillip. "The minute you get the thing you want, you begin to worry about something else, and x is just as far away as ever!" He returned to Polly's letter:

Lucy is pretty mad. You see she was booed right off the stage. Oh, it was dread-



ful, Phil! And those poor chorus girls! I just sat down and cried about them, and then they let me give a benefit for them, so they are all going to get back to the States all right. When I was called back, Lucy wanted to get at me with her finger nails. My, she was mad, Phil-lup! She has gone off now to some queer German place with an American millionaire she has attached, Mr. Henry Hampton—

Phillip dropped the letter for an instant and sat looking out of the window without seeing the landscape that flew by.

"How we get mixed up!" he thought. "You think you know a lot of people, and the first thing you know it's only a little circle."

He lifted Polly's letter and read on:

—Mr. Henry Hampton. Lucy came on him at the right-minute. He is fast and bad, and not very bright. I hate a man like that like I hate spiders, but they're useful to ladies like Lucy.

Phillip pondered long over this letter. He had learned to know Miss Jarvis and her weak and rather complaisant mother too well to dare venture any interference in their plans. After all, what Polly had written was no more than Paul knew, and had tried to tell them. It seemed new and freshly abhorrent to Phillip.

## CHAPTER XII.

Phillip came away from Colorado Springs unsatisfied. Anice had been glad to see him, but it had not been her old, affectionate gladness. She had seemed older, he thought, and graver. She had lost her color, which made her look more ill, although he knew the color had been unnatural.

"She hasn't had any fever for three weeks," Eva had told him.

"Is she always so—so quiet?" Phillip had asked.

Eva had nodded. She was too honest to deceive him. "They all say she is a model patient," she said, "and it's a very good thing to have the fever

stop like that; but of course it's too soon to tell anything yet. I simply won't nag at Doctor Stevens. You've no idea, Phip, how people act. I should think he'd go mad. They pin him down as if he had the power of life and death in his hands."

Eva was a very fine young woman, Phillip thought. Mrs. Winslow and her daughters were all improved in appearance by suitable, good clothes. Phillip remembered the untidy kitchen in the old home and Eva's fretful remonstrance against the sordidness of it all. Anice, even then, had seemed like some flower growing unexpectedly in an unlovely place.

Her aloofness during his visit had made him a little shy sometimes. He had walked with her and read to her, but they had not talked very much. It had seemed to him that Anice had not wished to talk. He had wondered whether she had forgotten all their little secrets.

One day, when he had been reading to her as she lay in a hammock swung under the pines, he had seen, as he had looked up, one slender hand hanging over the hammock's edge. The sun, shining on it, had given it for the minute a soft, pink color. He had laid the book by with a swift impulse to take her hand between his own, but Anice had looked up to see why he had stopped reading, and her manner had checked him. Then Mrs. Winslow had come to them, and his meditation had been interrupted by her chatter.

Anice had lain still in the hammock, looking toward the sunset with quiet eyes that seemed to Phillip to hold all the secrets of life and death. When they had decided to go in, she had risen and gone with them. It had seemed to Phillip that while she was there, she was not there.

At the moment of leaving, he had tried to kiss her, but she had drawn back gently.



"You mustn't," she had said. "I don't kiss any one now—you know."

As if she feared that she had hurt him, she had laid her hand on his arm in the old way. As he grasped her meaning, Phillip had felt as if wrapped by a flame of pain; he scorned and hated the suggestion of contagion. Anice had pushed him back again.

"I don't kiss any one, Phip, dear," she had repeated.

"Not even her own mother," Mrs. Winslow had put in. She had never ceased to be offended by this.

For an instant Anice had seemed like her old self.

"Never mind," she had said, laughing. "This time next year I shall be kissing everybody!"

"I shall take pains to be around at that time," a stranger passing near them had interposed. The man had looked back, laughing and lifting his hat. He was a patient at the sanitarium and had come to the station to meet a friend. Phillip's anger at the man's impudence blurred his recollection of the last moments before he left. As the train had pulled out, the thing most clear in his mind had been Eva's promise to send him a cable message if Doctor Stevens expressed any definite opinion about Anice.

Because the gentleman who was legal adviser for Jarvis & Co. happened to be in Paris at this time, Phillip and Paul sailed for Cherbourg, and went to Paris for a few days to consult him before opening the London matter. It was all very interesting to Phillip. He was spared the anxiety of the inexperienced traveler, for Paul had made the trip many times, and he would have enjoyed it all intensely if he had not been so troubled about Anice. The thought of Anice thrust itself into every hour, and with a constantly increasing sense of disappointment and troubled pain. He was annoyed because Anice had not seemed to resent

more deeply the impertinence of the stranger on the station platform at Colorado Springs. He was annoyed because she had not shown more affection for him; he thought she had not been really sisterly.

He was meditating on this one morning while he and Paul were walking in the Bois. He was not paying much attention to what Paul was saying, but when Paul stopped suddenly in the middle of a sentence, he looked up to see what was the matter. He saw Lucy Lee driving by in a luxurious motor car; and by her side sat Henry Hampton, looking rather bored and not paying much attention to her. The car passed slowly in a crush of vehicles, and Phillip and Paul saw its occupants plainly. Miss Lee glanced at Phillip as if she half recognized him and thought of bowing, but he looked away. He felt embarrassed. He shrank from her vulgarity as much as he did from her morals. She had grown very stout and was florid and overdressed, but she was still rather handsome.

"Did you see that?" asked Paul, after a moment's hesitation.

"Yes," said Phillip.

Neither of them spoke again for a few minutes, then Paul returned to the subject.

"That's the man my sister expects to marry," he said slowly, "and if I should write home what I have seen, Ethel and mother would only be annoyed with me." Phillip could think of nothing to say to this, so he was silent. "They seem to think," continued Paul, "that when he's married, he'll settle down like a Smollet or Fielding hero."

At the end of the week the young men went on to London, where Paul was at once so absorbed in his fiancée that Phillip was at liberty to go promptly to Polly. He found her looking a little tired, though she bright-

ened at once and greeted him warmly. He accused her of working too hard, and she laughed.

"I've been working like a colored person, Phil-lup," she said; "although just why our negro brethren are chosen as an emblem of excessive labor I've yet to learn."

"You are perfectly wonderful, Polly," he told her.

Polly beamed on him. "That's so nice to hear," she said, "that I'm thinking of hiring a boy to follow me around and say it every few minutes."

"You can have me for a while," said Phillip. "I'm here for six or eight weeks."

"But I'm going back," said Polly. "Oh, of course you don't know! Well, it's this way. I've got an offer for a ten weeks' vaudeville circuit in the States. Such a salary, Phil! It makes me dizzy." Polly shut her eyes for a minute.

"That's all very well," protested Phillip, "but you can't work yourself to death."

"I'm not going to," said Polly. "I'll get a good rest on the steamer going over and coming back. For I'm to come back, Phil. My play will be ready for rehearsal by the first of March, and we'll put it on by the middle of April. I'm scared, but it's a great chance. Sometimes it doesn't seem as if it could be true."

"Are you happy?" asked Phillip unexpectedly.

Polly flashed a sharp look at him. "Who is?" she demanded.

"Paul is," said Phillip; "but I suppose there'll be something coming along to worry him in about ten minutes."

"How's your little sister?" asked Polly, changing the subject abruptly.

Phillip's face clouded. "I really think she is better," he said slowly. "She doesn't have the fever any more. I don't know——"

"It's apt to be slow," said Polly soft-

ly. She realized that she had touched a tender subject and felt her way carefully as she continued: "I think maybe I can stop there on my way from Chicago to Denver, and I'd love to take her something. Is she too old for dolls?"

Phillip smiled a little, and her eyes grew narrow with a swift instinct.

"Why—yes," he said. "Anice is twenty-two. We are so used to thinking of her as the baby of the family that——"

"I see," said Polly.

Her hands were clenched under the table, but her voice was quite quiet and natural. She was recalling everything she had ever heard Phillip say about his stepsister. Polly's instinct was very keen, and she had always recognized that his interest in herself, while very sincere, was curiously impersonal. His slowness often made her a little impatient, but at the same time she loved him for it. If a drop of acid crept into her speech, Phillip never knew it.

"I see," she repeated. "And how old are you, Phil-lup?"

"I'll be twenty-six in December," he told her. "I thought you knew."

"H'm," remarked Polly, with an air of exaggerated surprise. "Almost old enough to be her father, aren't you?"

They both laughed. Polly's keen eyes surveyed him more than once that evening; she seemed to be appraising him. She did not speak of Anice again. She grew very gay, but he thought she was tired.

"You need rest," he told her as they parted.

"I need applause," she told him, "and lots of it. I've got to make a hit in the States, Phil. I need it in my business."

"Why, of course you will," he assured her. He felt troubled about her. He could not seem to understand her. "Women are queer," he reflected.

"You can't ever be sure what they are thinking about." He thought it would be very nice if Polly would stop in Colorado Springs to see Anice. He wrote Anice about it, and succeeded in making her believe that he was very much interested in Polly.

Polly wavered and changed her mind more than once about visiting Anice, but Phillip told her that he had written Anice she would come, and so, at the last, she went. It was a Sunday morning in December. She clad herself in her plainest, simplest suit and pinned a little hat on her wonderful gold hair. She tried to make herself look like what she considered the right sort of girl for Phillip Winslow to know and to introduce to his sister.

"I suppose," thought Polly whimsically, as she sat in the drawing-room waiting for Anice to come down, "I suppose I might be considered the patient martyr who likes the job." She heard the sound of footsteps coming down the hall and clenched her little hands in her huge muff. "But I don't like it!" she whispered. "I don't!" And then she saw Anice and her heart began to melt within her.

Anice came forward slowly, and the two women stood looking at one another. Polly was not quite what Anice had expected to find a successful vaudeville actress, and Anice did not look as ill as Polly had thought she might. "I wonder how near the truth we'll come," Polly speculated, as they greeted one another.

They were a little stiff at first. They spoke of Polly's journey and of Colorado—the climate, the scenery, all sorts of trifling things in which neither of them had any interest. After the first few minutes Polly began to think Anice looked badly. The little spirit that had animated her when she came into the room had fled, and she seemed weary. As a matter of fact, Anice was growing discouraged under the doc-

tor's silence, and since Phillip's letter had come telling her about Polly, she had drooped steadily. Now—in a moment, it seemed—she accepted the unfavorable verdict as if it had been already spoken. She began to yield to Polly's sweetness, leaning toward her with a touching little gesture of surrender.

"You are so sweet," she said, "I don't wonder——" She did not finish her sentence.

Polly stared at her. "Babes in the woods," reflected Polly; "that's what they are. They don't either of them know where they're at." She held herself in check and waited; she knew Anice had something to say. Then Anice spoke freely, and told her that she had given up hope.

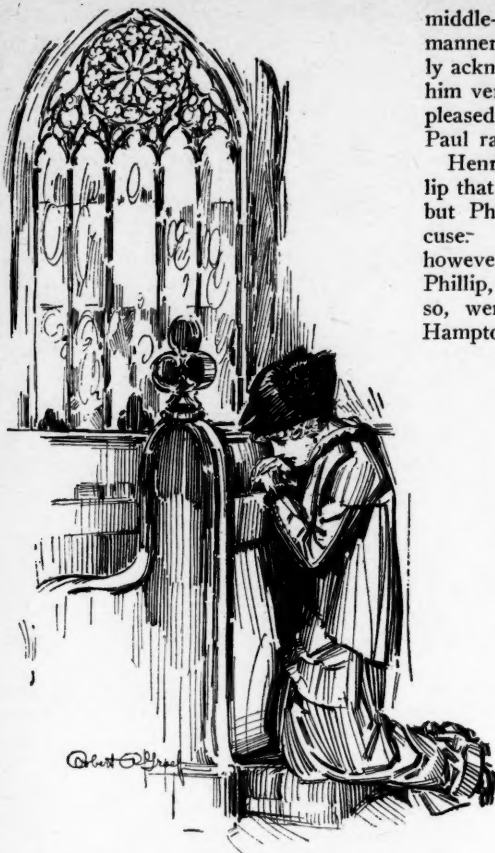
"When I came here," she said, "I thought I was going to get well. Every one does, you know. But I know now. No"—she answered Polly's question—"Doctor Stevens hasn't said anything yet—but I know. I am going to ask you to do something for me, will you?"

"Won't I!" said Polly.

"I'm going to write a letter to Phip," said Anice. She looked straight into Polly's eyes and smiled a little. "And I'm going to send it to you, and ask you to give it to him—after——" She stopped for a minute. "May I?" she asked. "I know now just what I want to say."

"You may," replied Polly.

Polly's manner changed after this. Mrs. Winslow and Eva came down, a little cool at first to this strange friend of Phillip's, but charmed with her before she left. She sang for them, some ballads and simple melodies. Polly's voice had never been sweeter than it was that afternoon. She could not stay long, but before she left she managed to see Doctor Stevens, and extract from him a definite opinion. Eva had erred by going to the opposite extreme in her impatience with her



*She went into an empty church, and knelt there for a little while alone.*

mother's inopportune questions. Polly kept her secret and went on, waiting for Anice's letter.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Phillip stayed in London for Paul's wedding, which took place early in December. Mrs. Jarvis and Ethel were unable to go over for it, but Henry Hampton appeared and made himself very agreeable. He was a worldly,

middle-aged man, whose irreproachable manners had a charm Phillip reluctantly acknowledged. Mrs. Colfax thought him very delightful, and was obviously pleased by his attention. She thought Paul rather stiff with him.

Henry Hampton suggested to Phillip that they cross on the same steamer, but Phillip was able to make an excuse. They arrived in New York, however, within the same week, and Phillip, without realizing he was doing so, went to the hotel where Henry Hampton was staying. They met as the clerk was conducting Phillip to a wing of the building that had suffered by fire, and was being repaired. They found Henry Hampton watching the work. A number of workmen were busy in the place. Phillip did not notice them especially.

Mr. Hampton greeted him cordially.

"Are you staying here, Mr. Winslow?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Phillip, "for a few days."

"So am I," said Mr. Hampton. "Drop in and have a smoke with me. My rooms are on the second floor, first corridor."

"So are mine," said Phillip. "Second door to the left as you come up."

"Mine is the third to the right," said Henry Hampton.

Neither of them noticed that one of the workmen had lifted his head and was looking at them attentively. The man returned to his work at once, but remained near them and listened to all they said. It was not strange that Phillip failed to recognize Jim Peterson, for Jim was greatly changed. His accident had left a scar on one cheek,

and he had grown much rougher and coarser.

After Phillip had gone away, Jim brooded in bitterness of spirit over the gulf that lay between them. He had been drinking, and when the noon hour came he went out and drank more, and his resentment and jealousy grew swiftly into ugly thoughts, brutal and desperate. When he came back, he was so evidently intoxicated that the foreman discharged him, and in his befuddled state of mind it seemed to him that Phillip was to blame in some way.

As he reeled along the street, his eyes by some evil chance fell on a revolver that lay in the window of a pawnshop. He entered the place, and the dealer, who had no right to sell the weapon to a sober man, sold it to a drunken man, after a few minutes' bargaining. He winked as he passed it over the counter and received for it much more than it was worth. Jim muttered something about wanting to shoot some cats, and the pawnbroker sold him a few cartridges, remarking that cats were a great nuisance sometimes. He had been very well paid for the transaction, and Jim was too drunk to identify him if there should be trouble later.

"It's not my affair," he said, and shrugged his shoulders with Oriental philosophy.

Jim knew the plan of the hotel. He went back, strangely steadied by a definite purpose, and entered by a door near the place where the workmen were. A maid saw him, but thought he had been sent on an errand. He moved quietly and naturally enough, as if he had a right to be there. He went up a flight of stairs and crept softly, like a cat, along the passage. He approached the corridor of which he had heard Phillip speak, but he approached it from the side opposite that indicated by Phillip. There were four doors on each side of the corridor.

Phillip had come up in the elevator after having had a late lunch. As he was about to turn down the corridor, he was surprised at being greeted by a large, handsome, vulgar woman who stood in the door of a drawing-room opposite the corridor. She called him by name.

Miss Lucy Lee had appeared unexpectedly, and had not been cordially received by Henry Hampton. He was anxious to avoid a scene, and not wholly free from her fascination, and the interview had not been satisfactory to either of them. She was a little afraid of him, but was not willing to let him go easily. She was rather glad to see Phillip, for she thought he might be useful. As Phillip recognized her, he was possessed by a most undignified and almost irresistible impulse to run. He realized that he must speak to her, and for a minute felt as shy as a little boy; then indignation gave him courage and wit.

"You don't remember me," she said, accusing him with a smile and holding out her hand to him.

"Oh, yes, I do," replied Phillip, with unexpected audacity. "You are the lady who dotes upon farm life."

Miss Lee laughed aloud. "Oh, please forgive me!" she cried. "I know I was horrid, but Polly Wilkins made me cross. You don't know what a little cat she is. I could tell you tales that——"

"Yes," said Phillip, surprised by his own fluency, "I have no doubt that you could tell some very interesting tales, if you chose."

Miss Lee looked at him sharply. "You've grown up, haven't you?" she said, and then a strange expression crossed her face, for she saw Jim Peterson creeping around the opposite end of the corridor. "Such a queer-looking man!" she exclaimed.

Phillip turned, and they both saw Jim open the second door at his left—



which was the third at the right of any one entering from the end of the corridor at which they stood; and then there came the report of a pistol, once—twice, cutting the silence sharply. In an instant there was a crowd of people in the corridor. A clerk seemed to come out of the floor, so soon was he on the scene. A bell boy ran up the stair, and a maid around a corner of the passage. People came from their rooms.

Phillip and Miss Lee saw Jim turn from the door and run to the fire escape at the end of the hall. He swung himself out and dropped. There was a narrow passage at that side between the hotel and the next building, and Jim landed there safely and went down the street unmolested. It was all over very quickly, and Phillip had not recognized his stepbrother. They all hurried down the corridor to the open door. Henry Hampton lay there on the floor in a pool of blood—dead.

"Gee!" said the bell boy, and this inadequate expression of horror brought them all to their senses. Lucy Lee half entered the room, glancing rapidly and keenly about. The clerk took charge of the situation.

"Madam," he said, "will you please leave the room?"

She retreated slowly. She did not look at Phillip. The clerk asked Phillip to remain in the room and see that nothing was disturbed until the coroner could be brought there, and asked the excited, curious guests to say nothing of the affair until they should be questioned by the coroner. He went away at last, leaving Phillip alone with the dead man.

It seemed a long time to Phillip before the coroner came. A fire burned cheerfully on the hearth, a clock ticked evenly; the passing of life and death meant nothing to them. Phillip stood before the fire. He walked up and down the room, trying not to look at

the still figure that was so terribly red and white. He wondered what Lucy Lee would do, and what Ethel Jarvis would learn, and how they would all feel about it. Something in Lucy's defiant manner as she had stepped into the room had given him the impression that she had yet a card to play. He wondered what it might be, and then he resolved imperiously that she should not play it. His old reverence for Jarvis & Co. was ineradicable, and his affection for Paul doubled his sense of responsibility. He resolved that Ethel Jarvis should have her decent grief.

"I'll shut that woman's mouth up," he said, half aloud.

He went over and stood by what remained of Henry Hampton, looking deliberately on what he had shunned before.

"I don't know who killed you," he said, "and I don't know why, but I'll keep her from knowing about this other woman if I can."

He understood suddenly that there was no reason whatever why a man like Henry Hampton should marry a girl like Ethel Jarvis unless he loved her. He began to feel a belated, half-comprehending sympathy for the man whose standards were all wrong, who had been launched upon life with false ideas of money, position, influence, pleasure.

"I used to think things were pretty dull sometimes," Phillip reflected, "but I didn't know what I was being saved from."

Jim Peterson, now frightened and half mad, crossed the avenue recklessly. The motorman of a surface car rang his bell angrily and shouted unflattering names at him, but Jim did not seem to hear. He staggered a little and then fell in a heap in front of the car. He was dead when they picked him up. He was identified by his union card; an old one, for he had been dropped

from membership some time before. Paul read of his death in the next morning's papers and went to the morgue, where he made arrangements for a decent burial.

He had not seen Henry Hampton's murderer plainly and he never knew the truth. He wrote to his stepmother a softened account of Jim's death, and she wept over it, but in the depth of her heart a great fear was at rest. She had feared Jim for a long time, and she knew how he hated Phillip. She began to remember Jim as the little boy who had been all her own, and Eva noticed that after this, when her mother spoke of him, it was always of his childhood. Women who have grieved often do this.

Phillip was held by the coroner as a witness, and had opportunity to talk with Miss Lee before the inquest.

He telephoned to her room and asked her to come to the drawing-room. A few minutes later they stood face to face. He could not help remembering how abashed and silent he had been before her spiteful thrusts at Polly's party. How long ago that seemed! He wondered if she remembered. He opened the conversation abruptly.

"What's your game?" he asked.

"Why should I tell you?" she answered.

"Maybe I can guess," he said. "Have you got some letters?"

It was only a guess, but her surprise betrayed her. He began to feel quite pleased with himself. He thought he was managing very well. Then he wondered what he was going to do. Miss Lee would probably not keep the letters secret, and his knowledge of their existence didn't help any. He felt less like a man of the world, and waited for her to make the next speech.

"I am going to get money for those letters," she said.

"From whom?" he asked.

"None of your business," said she.

"I am making it my business," said Phillip.

He wished Polly were in New York. It seemed to him that Polly would think of something to be done. He could not consult Paul. He must go through with it alone. She did not understand his manner. She thought him much keener and more at ease than he really was. His decent lack of interest in women like her struck her like a blow in the face as she realized it. Phillip, thinking as rapidly as he was able, hazarded another guess.

"You meant to make him buy them back?" he asked.

"I certainly did," said Miss Lee, "and for once in my life I was too slow and easy." She began to whimper. "I'm sick," she said. "You don't know how sick I am."

She did look ill. Phillip always shrank from the sight of suffering. He had called her to him in cold wrath, determined to leave her no advantage; he realized his impotence now as he faced her. He could not deal with such a woman. He simply did not know how. "What is there anywhere for a woman like that when her health gives out?" he thought, and he was pierced by pity for her.

She fumbled at a little bag she carried. "Wait a minute," she said, "until I get my tablet." She swallowed something and seemed to breathe with difficulty for a few minutes. Then she turned upon him savagely. "It's all very well for you to be high and mighty," she cried, "and to preach!" She rose to leave him.

"Wait a minute," he said. "You'd better, for I don't believe any one else will offer you what I'm going to."

She stood regarding him with curiosity.

"If you'll give me those letters," said Phillip, "and then sign an oath that there aren't any more——"

"Don't talk like a fool!" she interrupted.

Phillip went on as if she had not spoken. "—I'll give you six thousand a year as long as you keep still. The minute you open your mouth about Henry Hampton—no more money."

"I won't!" she cried. "I hate you!"

"Your sentiment is a matter of indifference to me," said Phillip.

She raved about the room. "I hate you!" she repeated. "I hate you!"

Then the pain came back to her and she sank into a chair, gasping for breath. Phillip picked up her little bag and gave her the bottle with the tablets.

"I'd try to keep my temper if I were you," he said.

She was worn by the excitement of the day and frightened by the frequency of her attacks.

"I'll take it," she said sullenly. "Give me a paper with your promise."

"I'll do nothing of the sort," said Phillip. "When you die suddenly some day, after one of your temper fits, I'm not going to have anything with my name signed to it among your effects. You know you'll get the money. Send word to my bankers where you want it sent quarterly. Now get me the letters."

She went and came back with a packet of envelopes. "Here they are," she said. "And that's all, whether you believe me or not."

"Now sign this paper," said Phillip.

"I hate you!" she said, but she signed it.

So Ethel Jarvis had her decent grief, and Henry Hampton's gentle, silver-haired mother mourned for her son without shame.

## CHAPTER XV.

Phillip dreaded the return to Wembleton. He dreaded the first interview with Ethel Jarvis. As he sat in the

train on his way home, he marveled at his own desire to shield Henry Hampton's memory. He meditated in the vein that had grown common with him.

"It's the same story everywhere," he thought. "We all have something or lack something that distorts our vision, pushes us, or holds us back. Only a few men are strong enough or gifted enough or fortunate enough to be able to fight their way through. I wonder if they are satisfied when they have done it."

He meditated upon the forces of circumstances; he felt himself so wholly a creature of circumstance. Henry Hampton had doubtless had some ideal that he considered unattainable. Perhaps Ethel Jarvis might have helped him to it in the end, if he had been permitted to live.

"I was bred to loathe the thing that allured him," Phillip thought. "All the influences of his life made certain vices venial in his mind. He was kind, in his thoughtless way; he had a code of honor, based on such standards as he acknowledged. He was without Christian training—but for that matter so was I."

Phillip's religious teaching had gone no farther than the irregular attendance at Sunday school that Mrs. Winslow had urged on all her children, ineffectually because vaguely, without further reason or explanation than her reiterated statement that she "didn't want folks to think they were heathen." Anice had always gone to church, Phillip remembered. He could see her now, as he shut his eyes, and forgot the noise of the rushing train; he could see her coming in on Sunday morning, with her little, worn prayer book in her hand and a soft, steady, shining light in her blue eyes. But he knew other people who went to church and were not like Anice.

His thoughts wandered on. Why

was he always alone, he wondered. It seemed to him that he had always been lonely. Money hadn't seemed to make any difference and friends hadn't. Friends usually had engrossing affairs of their own in which they wanted him to be interested. He gave his interest unreservedly, but he wanted something of his own. He wanted a center for life, a point to start from and come back to. He wanted—the realization came to him sharply—he wanted Anice.

He had missed some letters through having been detained in New York longer than he had planned, and he looked over his mail eagerly when he reached his lodgings. He had engaged a room at Mrs. Dennison's, and as he went up the stair, he remembered how fine it had seemed to him when he had first gone there to board. He found a number of letters waiting for him, but none from Anice. There was a fat envelope from Polly, and he was about to open that when he was called to the telephone by old Mr. Jarvis, who was anxious to see him. He slipped the letter into his pocket and went out. Mrs. Dennison, meeting him in the hall, told him that several letters had been sent on to New York by mistake, and he comforted himself by thinking that one from Anice might be among them.

He found old Mr. Jarvis greatly disturbed. The appellation "old" had been used so long that it had lost meaning to Phillip's ears, but now he realized that Paul's grandfather was indeed an old man. His hands trembled, and he seemed to cling to Phillip in a way that moved the young man deeply. The little boy who used to look in at the office window lingered in the background of Phillip's mind and wondered. The timid young clerk who didn't seem to have any friends joined the little boy and looked on. Phillip thought of them with a certain tenderness, and wondered what they would have felt if they could have foreseen

the day when old Mr. Jarvis, leaning on his arm, would go to the home of young Mr. Jarvis' widowed mother, where the women waited with pitiful eagerness for his coming.

He was helped through that evening by his sense that it was all unreal. He seemed to be in a dream that was broken now and again by some penetrating thrust of steel as he thought of Anice, or recalled some memory of Henry Hampton that must never cross his lips. While the women were talking, he found himself thinking that Doctor Stevens would probably not have kept Anice if she had been losing ground. He had learned there was another place to which they transferred the more serious cases. His mind was a patchwork of recollections and emotions, but his manner was quiet and sympathetic. Paul's mother kissed him when he left, and the caress moved him deeply. He led Mr. Jarvis to the door of his stately old home, where two servants had cared for him year after year. It was midnight when he opened Polly's package.

The contents surprised him, for there was only a brief note from Polly, and a second envelope addressed to him in Anice's handwriting. A chill smote him. He feared he had missed some letter or telegram. He cried Anice's name aloud, and was startled by his own voice. Then he looked at Polly's letter. He could trust Polly to tell him the truth, he thought, and he was quite right. Polly wrote:

PHIL-LUP: You are a very dear boy, but you are dreadfully slow. I am inclined to think you need what my landlady calls a *gardeen*. I have seen Doctor Stevens, and had a straight talk with him. He says that Anice is practically cured, and that he expects in a short time to pronounce her out of danger. He says she needs livening, and asked me if I thought she had anything on her mind. I said I knew she had, and I'd undertake to get it off if I had to use dynamite. I think maybe it takes dynamite to start you, Phil. She wrote this letter to you

when she thought she was going to die. I am sending it to you because she is going to live. For Heaven's sake, Phil, get a move on you!

POLLY.

He put out his hand at last and broke the seal of Anice's letter, which was blotted by the hot tears that fell upon it as he read.

I can say anything I like now. Phip, dear, because I am dead and everything is right in the great heart of God. I'm not very sure yet about my theology, but I'm very sure that it's all right, and that I can go on loving you forever and ever. I want you to be happy, Phip. I want that more than I want anything there is in heaven, and if there's any way the dead can help, I'll be near you all the time. I'll come into your home whenever I can, dear. It will be in the evening, I hope, and I'll stay a little while by the beds where your children sleep. Maybe God will let me give them happy dreams. Your wife won't need anything I can bring from heaven because she will have you. Polly was so good to me, Phip, so dear and sweet and good! Forever and ever and ever I love you.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Polly was not able to get West for the wedding. She sent Phillip a gay letter and answered all his entreaties with excuses. At the hour at which it was to take place, she went into an empty church, and knelt there for a little while alone. She thought she knew why Anice had not urged her as Phillip had.

"It's all right," she said to herself; "it's all right. They're the same kind, and that's the only safe thing." She adjusted her veil and went slowly down the avenue toward the theater where she was due within the hour. "Wouldn't I have led him a dance?" she reflected. "You can't make yourself all over in a minute because you'd like to!"

The lure of the stage was in her blood, and she was right when she believed she could not be contented in simple domesticity. Truth stared Polly in the face. She had the unerring

sense of it. "I often wish I could fool myself a bit," she had once said to Phillip.

Phillip and Anice went over to London to see Polly make her first appearance as a star. All the world knows what a success she was. Polly was not a great actress, but she was a good *comédienne*, and she had a most winning personality.

Within the next few years she made both fame and fortune. Five years later Phillip received a letter from her that brought an amazed, amused expression across his face. Anice sat at the other side of the breakfast table—such a blooming rosy, happy Anice!—and she protested at his delay in telling the news.

"Well, what do you suppose Polly has done now?" he asked.

She left her place and came to stand behind him. She laid one arm about his shoulder, and bent over the letter. Phillip laughed softly as he watched her face. She read:

What do you think I've done now, Phillip? I inclose my visiting card. Lady Alfred Algernon Arthur Percy Del Val—that's me! Not but what there have been some few slight family jars about it.

There was rather more than a slight coolness at first, but I did my prettiest. Alfred is a fifth son, you see, and that makes a difference. We are so remote from the succession that we are forgivable. I tackled the old lady first—I mean the dowager duchess—and now we're really great friends. And what's more, I like her—honest to goodness I do—if she does look like something that has been kept a long time in vinegar. Then papa came around—that was nuts!—and now the rest are on the way. I've made some money, Phil, these last few years, and that counts, I find, among other lofty sentiments. I'm going to leave the stage. And do you know?—I wouldn't have any one guess I thought so—but my husband is no end of a duck.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Anice.

She laid her head against her husband's shoulder and sobbed hysterically. Phillip never knew just why.





## On the Helping Hand

By Edwin L. Sabin

IT seems to me that if I were a rich man or woman—and being the latter is as remote as being the former!—

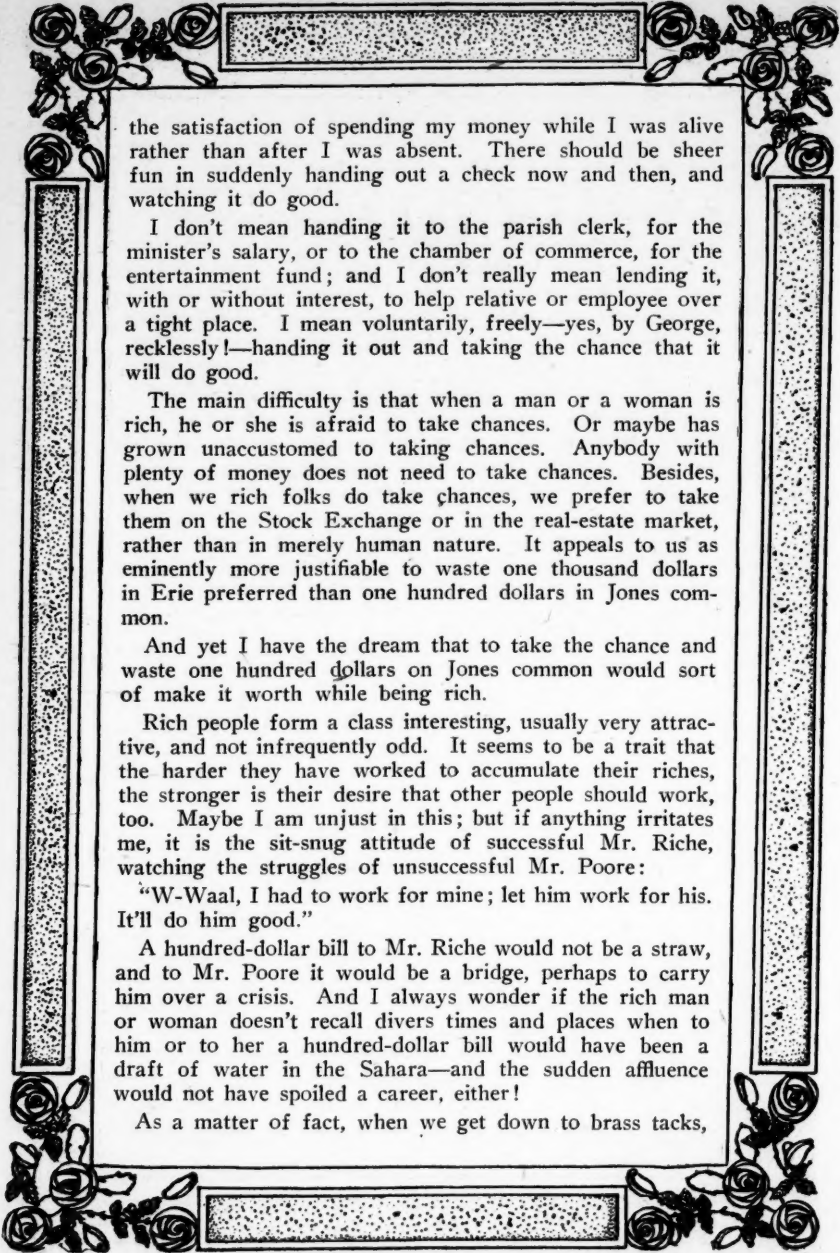
I would make it a point to look up worthy strugglers and help them along. There are individuals, couples, and families, to whom a thousand or even a hundred dollars now in extremity means life.

It ought to be fun to play the Harun-al-Rashid rôle, and, like that good caliph, keep one's eyes open as one moves about—not to buy or to sell, but to give. I'll wager with the man or woman who may be reading this article in a street car, or even in a Pullman or parlor car, that within elbow reach, almost, is somebody to whom an encouraging word, backed by a few dollars, would work wonders.

Of course we all have our dreams of what we would do if we were rich. When we do become rich, then we plan what we will do when we are richer. This scheme of extending the helping hand now and to-day, and in fashion promiscuous, may not be practical, for I have not tried it or had it tried on me; but it is a pleasant dream.

Custom appears to govern the distribution of material riches. Some rich people achieve satisfaction in endowing a ward at a hospital, or in founding a charitable institution or a library; and this is done, I suppose, with an idea of conferring the greatest good upon the greatest number. Other rich people distribute their riches—when useless to themselves—among relatives and servitors, all of whom are glad to get the same, although not all use it right away. The main flaw in this system, it strikes me, is the date of release—so to speak. The rich man's or woman's riches are not released until after he or she is dead.

It seems to me that if I were a rich man or woman—neither, as before stated, being possible, which gives me full liberty to plan as I please—I'd want to insure myself



the satisfaction of spending my money while I was alive rather than after I was absent. There should be sheer fun in suddenly handing out a check now and then, and watching it do good.

I don't mean handing it to the parish clerk, for the minister's salary, or to the chamber of commerce, for the entertainment fund; and I don't really mean lending it, with or without interest, to help relative or employee over a tight place. I mean voluntarily, freely—yes, by George, recklessly!—handing it out and taking the chance that it will do good.

The main difficulty is that when a man or a woman is rich, he or she is afraid to take chances. Or maybe has grown unaccustomed to taking chances. Anybody with plenty of money does not need to take chances. Besides, when we rich folks do take chances, we prefer to take them on the Stock Exchange or in the real-estate market, rather than in merely human nature. It appeals to us as eminently more justifiable to waste one thousand dollars in Erie preferred than one hundred dollars in Jones common.

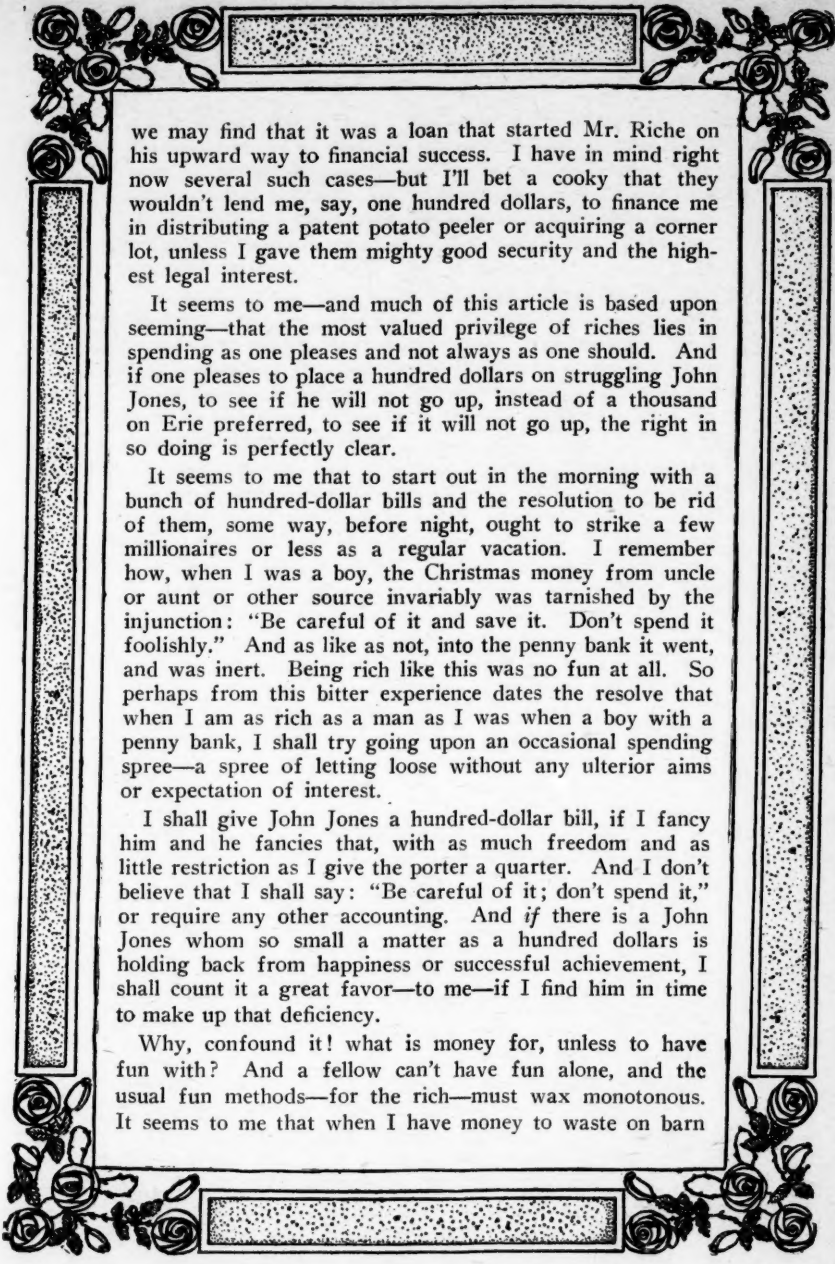
And yet I have the dream that to take the chance and waste one hundred dollars on Jones common would sort of make it worth while being rich.

Rich people form a class interesting, usually very attractive, and not infrequently odd. It seems to be a trait that the harder they have worked to accumulate their riches, the stronger is their desire that other people should work, too. Maybe I am unjust in this; but if anything irritates me, it is the sit-snug attitude of successful Mr. Riche, watching the struggles of unsuccessful Mr. Poore:

"W-Waal, I had to work for mine; let him work for his. It'll do him good."

A hundred-dollar bill to Mr. Riche would not be a straw, and to Mr. Poore it would be a bridge, perhaps to carry him over a crisis. And I always wonder if the rich man or woman doesn't recall divers times and places when to him or to her a hundred-dollar bill would have been a draft of water in the Sahara—and the sudden affluence would not have spoiled a career, either!

As a matter of fact, when we get down to brass tacks,



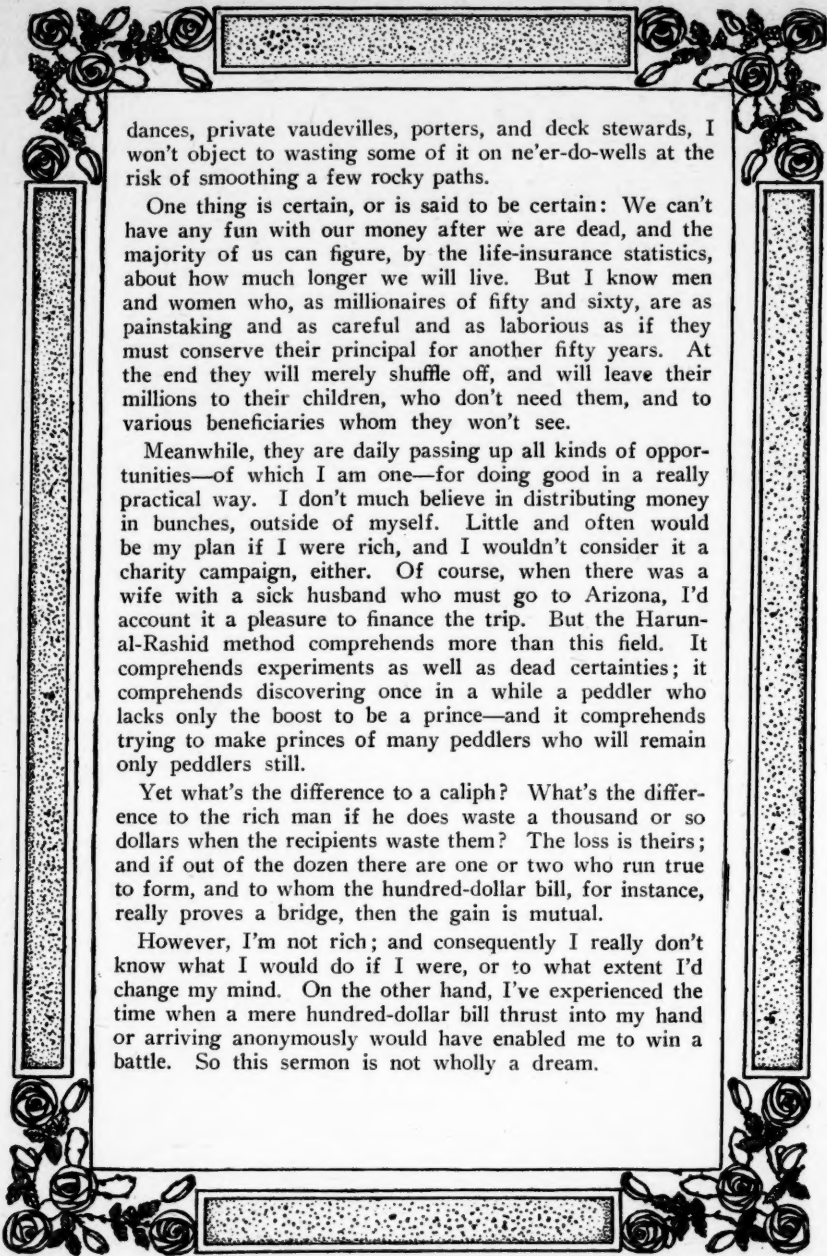
we may find that it was a loan that started Mr. Riche on his upward way to financial success. I have in mind right now several such cases—but I'll bet a cooky that they wouldn't lend me, say, one hundred dollars, to finance me in distributing a patent potato peeler or acquiring a corner lot, unless I gave them mighty good security and the highest legal interest.

It seems to me—and much of this article is based upon seeming—that the most valued privilege of riches lies in spending as one pleases and not always as one should. And if one pleases to place a hundred dollars on struggling John Jones, to see if he will not go up, instead of a thousand on Eric preferred, to see if it will not go up, the right in so doing is perfectly clear.

It seems to me that to start out in the morning with a bunch of hundred-dollar bills and the resolution to be rid of them, some way, before night, ought to strike a few millionaires or less as a regular vacation. I remember how, when I was a boy, the Christmas money from uncle or aunt or other source invariably was tarnished by the injunction: "Be careful of it and save it. Don't spend it foolishly." And as like as not, into the penny bank it went, and was inert. Being rich like this was no fun at all. So perhaps from this bitter experience dates the resolve that when I am as rich as a man as I was when a boy with a penny bank, I shall try going upon an occasional spending spree—a spree of letting loose without any ulterior aims or expectation of interest.

I shall give John Jones a hundred-dollar bill, if I fancy him and he fancies that, with as much freedom and as little restriction as I give the porter a quarter. And I don't believe that I shall say: "Be careful of it; don't spend it," or require any other accounting. And *if* there is a John Jones whom so small a matter as a hundred dollars is holding back from happiness or successful achievement, I shall count it a great favor—to me—if I find him in time to make up that deficiency.

Why, confound it! what is money for, unless to have fun with? And a fellow can't have fun alone, and the usual fun methods—for the rich—must wax monotonous. It seems to me that when I have money to waste on barn



dances, private vaudeville, porters, and deck stewards, I won't object to wasting some of it on ne'er-do-wells at the risk of smoothing a few rocky paths.

One thing is certain, or is said to be certain: We can't have any fun with our money after we are dead, and the majority of us can figure, by the life-insurance statistics, about how much longer we will live. But I know men and women who, as millionaires of fifty and sixty, are as painstaking and as careful and as laborious as if they must conserve their principal for another fifty years. At the end they will merely shuffle off, and will leave their millions to their children, who don't need them, and to various beneficiaries whom they won't see.

Meanwhile, they are daily passing up all kinds of opportunities—of which I am one—for doing good in a really practical way. I don't much believe in distributing money in bunches, outside of myself. Little and often would be my plan if I were rich, and I wouldn't consider it a charity campaign, either. Of course, when there was a wife with a sick husband who must go to Arizona, I'd account it a pleasure to finance the trip. But the Harun-al-Rashid method comprehends more than this field. It comprehends experiments as well as dead certainties; it comprehends discovering once in a while a peddler who lacks only the boost to be a prince—and it comprehends trying to make princes of many peddlers who will remain only peddlers still.

Yet what's the difference to a caliph? What's the difference to the rich man if he does waste a thousand or so dollars when the recipients waste them? The loss is theirs; and if out of the dozen there are one or two who run true to form, and to whom the hundred-dollar bill, for instance, really proves a bridge, then the gain is mutual.

However, I'm not rich; and consequently I really don't know what I would do if I were, or to what extent I'd change my mind. On the other hand, I've experienced the time when a mere hundred-dollar bill thrust into my hand or arriving anonymously would have enabled me to win a battle. So this sermon is not wholly a dream.

# Wanted: A Listener

By A. and R. Bergengren

ILLUSTRATED BY MARY R. BASSETT

WHEN Mr. Hannibal Ingersol had advertised:

WANTED: An intelligent person, college graduate under thirty, for work requiring not more than two hours a day. Must be a good listener,

he had pressed a button, and the results had been unexpected and remarkably satisfactory.

He reviewed them mentally as his car carried him home from the office, after he had paused on the way for a shave and a fresh flower in his button-hole, now and then changing the current of his thoughts to murmur what, if his chauffeur had heard him, would have sounded very much like the beginning of an after-dinner speech. As he did so, he beamed unconsciously—the intelligent, “listen-my-children-and-you-shall-hear” beam of the post-gastronomic speaker—and made a graceful, attention-compelling gesture with his yellow-gloved hand.

By occupation Mr. Ingersol was a broker; in worldly condition a bachelor; in appearance and fact, comfortably successful in both capacities. In the latter capacity, indeed, certain feminine relatives considered him too successful. A man in Hannibal's position, so they argued, overdid it when he kept bachelor hall in an entire house, refused the joys of “society,” and contented himself with exclusively masculine pleasures.

Mr. Ingersol, returning home just inside the speed limit, was certainly not thinking of these relatives, for he never

beamed when he thought of them. Women, he was wont to say, never talked sense unless they were talking business; and, as he did not believe that a man should talk business at home, this settled conviction let him out once for all as a matrimonial candidate. Men for Hannibal!—preferably men sitting around a long table, each with an attentive expression and something to smoke. He attended many such gatherings in the course of a winter, and it was to prepare himself for them that he had engaged, two months earlier, a “good listener.” If you expect your fellow man to listen to you, it is at least only fair to prepare yourself by proper rehearsal; and the more impromptu your address, as every post-gastronomic speaker knows, the more carefully it should be prepared beforehand.

The car stopped in front of Mr. Ingersol's house, and that gentleman, smooth-faced, ruddy, and looking a good eight years under his acknowledged forty, whistled as he let himself in with his latchkey. He shed his furs in the hall, glanced at himself in the mirror—really that prematurely high forehead was not as bad as it might be!—and approached his library.

As he opened the door, he came face to face with a nice girl on the other side of it. She was about twenty-five years old, of a slight figure, with serious brown eyes under a fur-trimmed hat; and her gloved hand was extended toward the doorknob.

“Oh!” she exclaimed suddenly.





*If you expect your fellowman to listen to you, it is at least only fair to prepare yourself by proper rehearsal.*

Mr. Ingersol, although startled, was a man of presence of mind. He took the extended hand and shook it politely.

"Am I late?" he inquired.

The nice girl turned red and withdrew her hand, a movement of retreat that left Hannibal between herself and the door. Nobody enjoys blushing unexpectedly, even when it is becoming to an otherwise pale complexion, and her annoyance was quite excusable.

"No," she said, and added, rather unnecessarily: "But—I was going."

"Not feeling ill, I hope," said Mr. Ingersol anxiously.

"No. I'm quite well. But——"

Hannibal, although he ordinarily had little sympathy with her sex, looked relieved, but still troubled.

"But what, Miss Ryder?" he insisted. "Our business hours are just on the point of opening."

Miss Ryder took a step toward the door.

"Don't run," said Hannibal. "What's up, anyway?"

"I am not—running," declared Miss Ryder. "I left a note on your desk."

"Which you expected me to find after you had gone?"

"Yes. I've decided to give up our engage—our business arrangement, Mr. Ingersol."

Mr. Ingersol stared frankly at the young woman whom he seemed so little surprised to find in his library. Considered critically, she was not beautiful; but Hannibal was not consider-

ing her as a picture in an art gallery. Nor would it be altogether correct to say that he was considering her as a trusted employee who suddenly gives in an unexpected resignation. It occurred to him, irrelevantly, that she had the most charming nose, although he couldn't have told himself why, that he had ever observed on the face of woman. But then Hannibal was not accustomed to study feminine noses. What he said was extremely business-like.

"If you're dissatisfied with the—er—emolument——"

"No," replied Miss Ryder, almost indignantly. "You pay me more than I earn. The mistake was in answering the advertisement."

"It never occurred to me," said Mr. Ingersol simply, "that a woman would answer it. As you know, Miss Ryder, I'm a man's man——" Here Mr. Ingersol observed a smile flitting below the remarkably charming nose, and changed his tone briskly. "Nobody else answered it. I've often wondered why you did."

"I needed the money," explained Miss Ryder. "Not for myself. I have my own income. Mother and I had taken a flat on Arlington Street just before I saw your advertisement. I had been interested in social work in college. I had taken it up again here—and I wanted the money for my poor people. The short hours looked good to me, and your idea seemed quite sensible. But when I'm hired to hear a man rehearse speeches—it doesn't seem right to accept money for—general conversation."

"Well," said Mr. Ingersol flatly, "suppose we say that the man is willing, and even anxious, to pay for general conversation."

"Do you expect people—other people," said Miss Ryder coldly, "to understand that kind of a business arrangement?" She went to the desk, picked up her note, and deliberately tore it into small pieces. "I don't see any use in discussing it. That's why I wrote."

"But I never made a better series of speeches," expostulated Hannibal. "They've gone fine. I don't mind saying that some of the things that went best were things you suggested."

"A man——" began Miss Ryder.

"Hang a man!" declared Mr. Ingersol vehemently. "Do you know what a man would do? He'd listen all right, or pretend to, but he wouldn't dare criticize. He'd be afraid of losing his job if he didn't smile in the right place. He'd think that was what he was paid for. And don't you see that the gen-

eral conversation is a legitimate part of it—spurs a fellow's mind——"

"I'm afraid I don't," said the ex-listener regretfully. "We haven't talked much about the topics of your speeches. I'll have to say good-by, Mr. Ingersol."

"But you can't," declared Hannibal desperately. "You—you have to give notice, you know. And you can't say good-by until I do." Any observer would have seen that Mr. Ingersol was trying to handle an unpleasant alternative lightly, but diplomatically. "You can't say good-by all by yourself."

But Miss Ryder was already once more at the door; and the door was open.

"Oh, yes, I can," she replied firmly—and the door closed behind her.

For perhaps thirty seconds Hannibal Ingersol contemplated the closed door with dismay on his usually contented countenance; the door itself was hardly blanker. Helen Ryder was gone! There remained only an impression of something missing—of something nice and cheerful and companionable that had been there and would never come back. Also, some pieces of torn writing paper in the wastebasket. Mr. Ingersol picked them out tenderly, sat down at the desk, and began methodically putting them together like a cut-up puzzle—and this puzzle, once put together, was more communicative than his ex-listener. She had not only disappeared bodily toward one of the twenty or more apartment houses of Arlington Street—which was all he knew of her residence—but she was about to leave town on a visit. Immediately. And she would never come back to Mr. Ingersol's library. "Never!" said the clock. "Nev-er—Nev-er—Nev-er!"

In the forty-odd years of his life, Mr. Ingersol had never felt so completely alone or so painfully undecided. He made no bones of what had happened to him. He was—little as he liked the

phrase—in love with Miss Ryder. He had been in that strange condition for weeks, perhaps ever since he first saw her, although till this moment he had not discovered it. What was worse he had, as he now saw it, consistently made an ass of himself in her wonderful presence. He had bored her with his silly speeches. He had amused her—at his own expense—with his foolish airs of masculine superiority. He had disgusted her with his generally uncomplimentary view of her own sex. He had forgotten at times that she actually belonged to it.

And now she had vanished, unable to stand him any longer, and he had no excuse to follow her even if he knew where to follow. Very well, ve-ry well, said Hannibal to himself grimly, he would close this incident. If he had been an ass, he would now be a sot in addition; and after he had accomplished this unpleasant combination, he would think no more of Miss Helen Ryder because he would be too ashamed of himself. It was a heroic remedy, and the sooner taken the better.

Mr. Ingersol took his head from between his hands, got up, and approached the speaking tube that communicated with his basement. He pressed a button and spoke vigorously to the tube.

"William," he said, "bring me here at once a bottle of cocktails, a bottle of champagne, two bottles of Scotch, and a siphon."

"Yes, sir," said the tube incredulously in a muffled tone. "A party, sir?"

"No."

"Miss Ryder?" questioned the tube huskily. "Glasses for two, sir?"

"Glasses for one!" said Mr. Ingersol angrily. "Confound you, William, do you work for me or do I work for you? Miss Ryder has gone home. I am going to get drunk."

"Yes, sir," agreed the tube hastily. "I understand, sir. In a moment, sir."

Hannibal turned from the instrument. Now that he had done something that upset the complacency of his self-respect, the determination to forget it by doing something worse made him feel calmer. He was none the less determined.

But why, if it had been altogether easy for her to end their business arrangement, if she had found no satisfaction at all in these afternoon sessions of general conversation with a conceited pup of a bachelor in his own library, why had she not written and mailed her letter? Why had she come there at all that afternoon? Why, having come there, had she changed her mind and decided to go away again without seeing him? He gloomed at William, as that trusted servitor, after a preliminary knock, entered with the materials of the proposed orgy, and stood looking curiously out of the corner of his eye at the prospective bacchanalian. It was an old eye, but observant.

"Put those things down on the writing table," said Mr. Ingersol coldly. "And if anybody calls, say I'm not at home."

"Yes, sir."

"I am going," repeated Mr. Ingersol, a trifle defiantly, as he looked away from William's observant eye, "to get drunk. I have never been drunk, and I am curious to experience the sensation. I dare say," he added, "that it will be just as well not to mention it to your wife——"

William nodded understandingly, but his long face and neat whiskers wore a distinct shade of respectful regret and disapproval.

"I don't think she'd let you, sir," he said quietly, "begging your pardon for the observation, sir."

In spite of his determination Mr. Ingersol smiled. Settled as he was upon making a sot of himself, he realized that if the resolution got down to his cook, there would be serious and efficient opposition. In fact, it was fairly

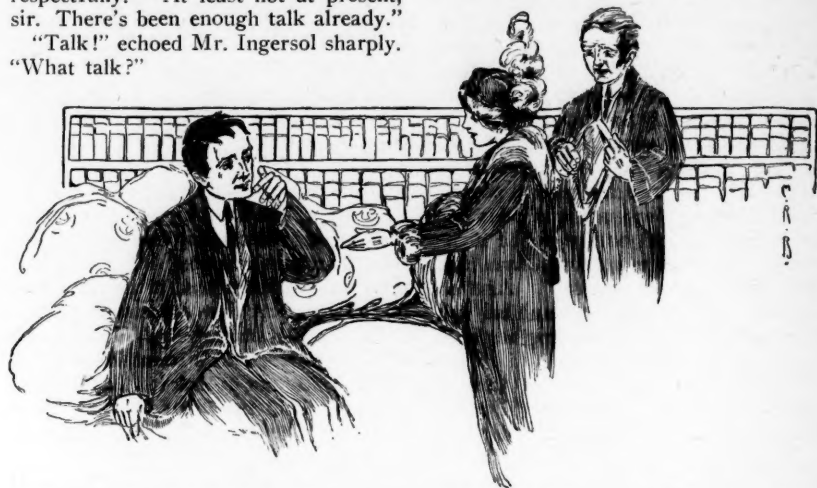
evident that William himself, although sorely puzzled, was not yet taking his employer's intention with complete seriousness. It began to dawn upon Mr. Ingersol that he would have been wiser to select some other place than his own home for his plunge into the Lethe of forgetfulness.

"I wouldn't do it, sir," said William respectfully. "At least not at present, sir. There's been enough talk already."

"Talk!" echoed Mr. Ingersol sharply. "What talk?"

dignity, "that Miss Ryder has been—er—helping me with my speeches."

"So I told the ladies. 'She's a professional yellowcutioner and can't help her looks,' says I, 'and she hears Mr. Ingersol say his pieces like a mother with her child.' But 'twas easy to see they didn't just what you might call swallow it whole, sir. They find things



*"Where am I?" asked Mr. Ingersol in a strange, hushed voice. "Who are you?" He shook his head feebly, and repeated the question.*

William shifted uncomfortably from one foot to the other.

"It's your sister, Mrs. Blake, and the young ladies, sir. They've been coming to Nettie and me, but little enough satisfaction they got from us, with all respect to the family. 'William,' says they, 'what's the meaning of such scandalous proceedings in this house? A young and pretty woman shut up with your master hours at a time in the library—and she not a typewriter? And I can't say that I've found it easy to explain myself, sir, though I assured them everything was innocent and proper.'"

"You know," said Mr. Ingersol, with

out, sir. If 'twas rumored you'd been drinkin', they'd not hold *you* responsible, to my way of thinking."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Ingersol thoughtfully. "And I think we can trace their information to the old friend of the family who lives just across the street."

"It wouldn't surprise me, sir," admitted the servitor.

Mr. Ingersol gazed meditatively at his private bar, but it seemed to have lost its promise of happy oblivion. The idea of becoming, even temporarily, a sot no longer appealed to him. He sat down on the arm of a chair and examined his intention with positive re-

pulsion. Granting that he had been an ass, he now saw plainly that nothing would have been gained by becoming a sot, especially as it would be quite possible for a patient man to find where Miss Ryder lived by visiting one apartment house after another. It was a pity that the city directory wasn't compiled at shorter intervals. If she had got home, she was probably already packing her trunk to make that visit; but no visit lasts forever. And Arlington Street was a lengthy thoroughfare. Perhaps her home was at the far end of it—and *she had not yet got there.*

Mr. Ingersol stood up suddenly. With a motor car— But a man couldn't jump into a motor car, pursue a young woman, leap out, and offer her his heart and hand on the public highway. There are more ways than one of exceeding the speed limit. And no ordinary request, of that Hannibal was absolutely certain, would bring her back to his own library.

"William," he said quickly, turning to where that trusty servitor still stood respectfully waiting for orders, "take these things back to the dining room, call that taxi across the street, and let the driver take you along Arlington Street as fast as the law allows. If you overtake Miss Ryder, stop the car and tell her I've been taken dangerously ill, suddenly, just after she left. Had a stroke, for example. The main thing is to get her back here. I've got something to say to her, and it's got to be said immediately. Tell her you're frightened to death yourself—didn't know what to do—decided to catch her—"

His anxiety pushed William out of the room, bearing the tray and muttering a vague comprehension. A moment later his employer, watching from the window, saw him summon and disappear in the hurrying taxi.

But would William sight that graceful figure that might still be moving

along Arlington Street, or was she already packing her trunk? And if William caught her and brought her back, what was the wisest way to receive her? Having for his own purposes impetuously announced himself as suddenly and dangerously ill, should he or should he not attempt to play up to his bluff?

Mr. Ingersol imagined himself prone on the couch and being restored to consciousness by Miss Ryder's anxious ministrations—provided William caught her and persuaded her to return and minister; but, as he regarded his own reflection in the mirror over the mantelpiece, he was compelled to admit that he looked, even with his eyes closed as tightly as he could close them and still see himself, like anything but an invalid, and still less like a dying one. He undid his collar and rumbled his hair; but there was not enough of it in front seriously to affect his appearance. He looked untidy, but healthy. He was not the first man who has found it easier to say he is ill than to look it. And if Mr. Ingersol could see this for himself, he could hardly expect it to escape so bright a young woman as he hoped was now speeding to his assistance.

He rebuttoned his collar and hurried to the window as a car turned the corner. Miss Ryder was in it. William was helping her out almost before the driver had brought the car to a standstill. It would certainly never do for Miss Ryder to find the stricken man up and about and as lively as a cricket.

William opened the library door cautiously. He came in followed by his abducted companion. They found Mr. Ingersol sitting up on the couch and looking about him in what was meant to be a dazed, bewildered manner. He put up one hand and brushed the air in front of his eyes as if removing a persistent cobweb.

"Where am I?" asked Mr. Ingersol in a strange, hushed voice, squinting about the room until his half-closed eyes



rested on the two recent arrivals. "Who are you?" He shook his head feebly, and repeated the question.

"You are safe at home," replied Miss Ryder reassuringly. "This is William, you know." She indicated William, and then herself. "And this is I—Helen Ryder. I hope you are feeling better."

"I seem to have been asleep," said Mr. Ingersol. He got up, still a little uncertain on his legs, but recovering rapidly. It was probably the rapidest recovery ever made from a state of unconsciousness. "I sat down," he continued, evidently trying bravely to piece his past together, "and was thinking—yes, I was thinking over my speech for the club anniversary next Thursday. It must have put me to sleep." He nodded, still a bit uncertainly, to William, who took the hint and disappeared, softly closing the door behind him. "It put me to sleep," repeated Mr. Ingersol. "That's rather an unlucky outlook for you, Miss Ryder."

"But I've been here before," said Miss Ryder. "Don't you remember?" She stared keenly at her ex-employer's healthy brown complexion, and then at the couch on which he had been sitting. The pillows were arranged neatly, plump and undisturbed by the pressure of any suddenly stricken invalid. "I don't believe you have been ill at all," she continued slowly. "This is simply an unworthy trick—I suppose you think it a joke—to get me back here after I said you couldn't."

"I had a shock all right," said Hannibal. "I've been ill mentally. You didn't tell me you were going away from the city. You left no address."

"But what difference did that make?"

"That was the shock—to discover that it did make such a difference."

Such a statement, made with indisputable sincerity, will create a pause in any conversation between man and woman.

"I had to see you," he continued. "I had to get you back. Nothing else would have brought you—and William couldn't have done it, anyway, if you hadn't been willing to come. It all depended on that—whether William could overtake you, and whether you cared enough, aside from our business arrangement, to come back if you thought I needed you. Why, after you had gone, this house seemed as big—as big as a desert. And it felt like a desert. And I was lost in it—lost—no oasis." Mr. Ingersol had forgotten the oasis he had thought of creating. "And I saw you far away—like a mirage," continued Hannibal, hanging on to his figure, but almost painfully in earnest. "A man can't live like that. He has to go after the mirage."

"Or send his butler," suggested Miss Ryder. She had started to take off her gloves when she came in, presumably to bathe the brow of the stricken, but now she was buttoning them up again.

"Yes," said Mr. Ingersol defiantly, "or send his butler. Now that I'm telling the truth, I'll tell all of it. I—I don't really make as many speeches as I've led you to imagine. I've been makin' 'em up for the sake of the general conversation. I didn't expect to employ a listener more than once in a while, anyway. I know this isn't the conventional place to say what I'm saying. But you're going away on a visit. I didn't know where you lived. There wasn't time to go to every house—"

Miss Ryder had finished buttoning her glove; and although she had turned red, and knew it, she smiled as she looked at him.

"I'm only going for the week-end, Mr. Ingersol," she said. "And, being no longer my employer, if you'll drive me home in your car, I think you will find out where I live."



# The Swan Song of Iverson's Youth

by  
Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Awakening of Romola," "For Geraldine's Career," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

IVISON stood just inside the vestibule door, waiting for his horse to be brought around to the front steps. He was pulling on his riding gloves and carrying on a desultory conversation with his sister Mary. Or, at any rate, he was lending half an ear to the monologue in which Mary Iverson was indulging.

"It's all very well for you, Fen," grumbled the lady, holding the inner door open in order to give her brother the benefit of her opinion to the last moment, "to run to catch a train or to go for a ride or off to play golf every time I mention the subject. But I'm in earnest. I want to get back to my work. I've wasted three years here in——"

"Wasted? Oh, come, now, Mary! It isn't as bad as all that," interrupted Iverson, looking eagerly through the glass top of the outer door toward the path that led to the stable.

"Yes, it is as bad as all that," insisted Miss Iverson firmly. "I don't want to seem disagreeable or ungrateful or even unfriendly. But, really,

you know my work is being a missionary in India. And how I can claim that keeping house for you in Green Notch, New Jersey, has anything to do with Christianizing the East Indians, I don't see."

"It's all nonsense, Molly," declared the impatient Mr. Iverson, more cheerfully now, for he saw his steed approaching and knew that in two more seconds he could escape the argument. "You've done a lot more good in keeping me civilized than you would have done in converting fifty little Indians. Here's Peter now. We'll talk about it this evening at dinner."

So saying, Mr. Fenwick Iverson waved a pleasant farewell to his sister, disregarding her irritated reminder that there would be guests at dinner, and betook himself off, according to his Saturday afternoon habit, for a canter through the hills. Mary Iverson, a slight scowl on her wholesome, middle-aged face, returned to the library from which she had emerged to harangue her brother as long as possible.

"Fen's a dear boy," she informed the

fire, as she stooped to replace a fallen log with the tongs, "but he's hopelessly selfish. That's our blessed mother's fault, of course. She kept him so comfortable—so simply swaddled in comfort!"—Mary punched the log vindictively as she emphasized the quality of her brother's comfort—"that it never occurred to him to want a home of his own. He had it already—a delightful one, with a most charming and accomplished hostess at its head.

"And then when the poor darling fell into that long and torturesome illness and sent for me, what could I do but come? What did I want to do but come, for the matter of that? I was glad to stay with her during those last twelve months of her life, and I was glad enough to stay with Fen for the next twelve months of readjustment. But I certainly never meant to give up my entire existence to ordering his dinners for him and seeing that the wheels of his house were well oiled. If that had been my idea of a desirable lot, why, I'd have undertaken it twenty-five years ago for some other man than Fen.

"He ought to get married, as I've told him at least a thousand times. There's no earthly reason why he shouldn't. I want to see him married to a nice girl—a nice woman, I mean, for Fen ought to have a seasoned companion, none of your young chits of things—and I'd be off again to the foreign-mission field. Why on earth he and Dorothea——"

Miss Ivison broke off abruptly in her meditations as she heard a movement in the hall behind her. A servant ushered into the library a lady, obviously a near neighbor, from her hatless condition.

"Why, Dorothea!" cried Mary Ivison cordially. "How nice to see you! What have you got there?" The caller held something in her hands covered with a white damask napkin.

"I've brought back the glass dish you sent the wine jelly over in the other day," replied Miss Dorothea.

"Oh, you needn't have bothered," said Mary, taking the dish and lifting the napkin. "Why, you dear thing! It's full of your hermit cookies."

"Yes, Wanda baked to-day," replied the caller. "I saw Fen ride off a few minutes ago, and I thought I'd come in for a little chat, if you weren't busy."

"No, I'm not busy. The Altschulers are coming to dinner to-night with a niece of theirs who is visiting them, but I've done all the extra things that need to be done. I've just been giving Fen notice. I do it on an average of twice a week, but this time I mean it. It's perfectly absurd, my staying here and keeping this place going for him, when I really want to be somewhere else, when I belong somewhere else! He ought to get married."

Miss Ivison finished her remarks with a sharp glance at her caller's face. But Miss Dorothea Carruth was no novice, to be caught unawares by a little trick like that. She smiled blandly.

"I'd been telling Fen that for five years before you came home," she observed pleasantly. "And it's been true all that time. He's a beautifully domesticated animal, and it's a great pity that he isn't making some nice girl comfortable and happy." She returned Miss Ivison's stare with the suavest and most innocent gaze.

"You couldn't bring yourself to marry him, I suppose?" snapped out the elder lady, after a moment's silence.

Dorothea laughed, a musical, rippling laugh.

"It would be just as likely to occur to Fen and me to marry as it would to you and him. You forget we have lived side by side throughout my entire existence, and that we're more like brother and sister than lots of own brothers and sisters."

"Well," grumbled Mary, "he's got to

find some one else to keep his house for him. It's perfectly ridiculous, the way that man's been spoiled. Mother spoiled him as long as she lived—I dare say that was natural, as he was the youngest of us. And you had a hand in it, I suppose, during all these years of your fraternal intimacy. And then I come along and take up the work. Well, I'm through now."

Mary Ivison's jaws snapped together determinedly, and she nodded her plainly coiffed, iron-gray head with much emphasis. Dorothea laughed again, not quite so merrily this time.

"Well," she replied, "I suppose that if anything could drive him to matrimony, it would be to find himself suddenly without a housekeeper."

"Do you mean to tell me," began Mary again argumentatively, "that he hasn't fallen in love with girls? Why, Fen— Let me see—he's eight years younger than I am, and I'm forty-six. I was away in the East from the time I was twenty-three until mother's illness called me home. Of course, he hadn't begun to have affairs before I left, but you don't mean to tell me that he went through all those years afterward without ever falling in love?"

"Bless you, no!" Dorothea's voice was heartily amused. "From the time he was nineteen until he was twenty-six or seven I should say that he fell in love on an average four times a year. I know all about it, you see, because I used to be his confidante. He used to come to me with his earliest symptoms and with his latest—that is, he used to come and ask me how to scrape an acquaintance with this girl or with that; and, later, to ask me to help him out of his entanglements by letting him pretend to be devoted to me. He had rather a serious affair about ten or eleven years ago, and since then he's been pretty much as you found him when you came home."

"Humph!" said Mary, with a slight start. "Who was the serious person?"

"She was a divorcee, who was paying a visit here that summer—a very attractive woman. As that was the only one of his affairs that Fen didn't confide to me, I know it must have been pretty serious. Indeed, for a year after she and her husband became reconciled and were remarried, he rather did the hermit act. Poor Fen! He was very hard hit that time."

There was a change in her gay, friendly voice; a note of wistfulness, of yearning came into it that made Mary look at her quickly. But there was no telltale expression on the lovely face of her guest.

"You've accounted for Fen," observed Fen's sister. "How do you account for yourself? When did you have your hard-hitting? Why aren't you married yourself?"

But Miss Carruth merely laughed.

"I'm sure I don't know how I've managed to escape the common fate," she said lightly. "But I'm not pining, as you can see."

"If only you and Fen would hit it off!" groaned Miss Ivison desperately.

"Well, we never shall," declared Miss Carruth, with vigor. "And now that I've told you all I can think of about your brother, I'll go home again and leave you free to do all sorts of last things before your dinner party. Who knows? Perhaps the Altschulers' niece will solve your problem for you!"

"Oh, she's nothing but a schoolgirl," replied Miss Ivison, dismissing the young lady as entirely negligible.

When her brother had come in from his ride and was dressing for dinner, she was guilty of trying to "pump" him in regard to Dorothea Carruth, as she had already succeeded in pumping Dorothea Carruth in regard to him; but Fen was rather vague about his neighbor's love affairs. Yes, of course, Dorothea had had admirers, offers, one or



*"Gad, ma'am, when I fought to preserve the Union, I thought it was to be something worth preserving!"*

two really brilliant "opportunities," if one felt like talking about marriage in that way. Why had she never married? How on earth should he know? Did Mary imagine that Dorothea was the sort of person who wore her heart upon her sleeve, who confided to the world her emotions? Probably she had not married for the same excellent reason that had induced Mary herself to remain single—because she preferred single life.

"But I," exclaimed Mary, somewhat belligerently, "I have had my work. I have had my blessed school!"

"Well, Dorothea has had her work," responded Ivison casually. "Her talent has been domestic and social. She keeps house as well as you proselytize among the Hindus."

"Of course she does!" snapped Mary. "And that's the reason I am wondering why she never acquired a home of her own."



"Well, being the only child of old Colonel Carruth and running his place for him probably seems to her like having a home of her own. But why, my dear Mary, don't you ask Dorothea herself anything you may wish to know about it?"

With this suggestion, which his sister received with a snort, Mr. Ivison resumed his interrupted preparations for dinner and the whistling of a tune.

When the Altschulers made their appearance in the Ivison drawing-room a little later, they were accompanied by the young woman whom Mary Ivison, with the blindness of forty-six, had characterized as a negligible school-girl. She was eighteen, Miss Gladys Grant, and very charming. Even Mary, though still disposed to regard her as belonging in the nursery, was bound to admit that. She had fly-away, yellow hair and dancing, brown eyes, and the fragile effect of her slenderness was counterbalanced by the brilliant health of her coloring.

Mary turned to present her brother to the girl as he turned from his greeting of Mrs. Altschuler. But it was apparent that no introduction was needed. Fenwick was advancing toward Miss Grant with a delighted "Is it possible that it is you?" on his lips, to which Miss Grant was responding with an equally rapturous "How perfectly splendid!"

"Do you and Mr. Ivison already know each other, Gladys?" asked Mrs. Altschuler, surprised.

"Why, auntie, don't you remember I told you all about the gallant horseman who rescued me, when that birch I was holding to on the side of the ravine began to give way? It was Mr. Ivison."

"See what it is to bring a fresh pair of eyes to a place!" said Mrs. Altschuler, laughing. "I made sure, from Gladys' description of her rescuer as a cross between Sir Lancelot and Wil-

liam Faversham, that it was no one native to this region. But now that I look at you, Fen—" She broke off with a comfortable little chuckle, half mockery, half affection.

"Now that you really look at me, you see the resemblance for yourself, don't you?" replied Fenwick.

And then dinner was announced, and the little party traversed the hall toward the dining room, and the pleasing little feast that Mary Ivison told herself rebelliously was the symbol of the whole mass of trivialities keeping her from her own career. But before the meal had ended, there had flashed upon her perceptions the idea that the way out of her irksome situation lay almost ready to her hand. During the whole three years that she had been at home she had not seen Fenwick look at any woman with the liveliness of admiration with which he was looking at the little chit of a schoolgirl seated at his left.

"Well, why not?" Mary demanded of herself. "Of course, she's twenty years younger than he is, but if he likes them that way, why not let him have them? Of course, he'd be a doddering old man by the time she was a vigorous, mature woman—but she could take all the better care of him! Women have always taken care of Fen! He's got to marry somebody; that's all there is about it! If only he and Dorothea would——"

She ended with a sigh. What was the use of dwelling upon impossibilities? He and Dorothea had had some thirty-odd years in which to fall in love, and they had stupidly and unoblingly failed to avail themselves of the opportunity. There was no good in thinking about that now. Would Dorothea mind, she wondered, if Fenwick did marry another woman? Certainly nothing could have been more indifferently cordial, more casually sisterlike, than Dorothea's comments upon

him this afternoon; but that was not absolutely conclusive. Indifference is one of the tricks that every woman knows. And certainly they were most intimate friends.

Mary tried to recall how many evenings a week, since her return from India, her brother had had some errand at the Carruth house—now to play a game of backgammon with old Mr. Carruth; now to help Dorothea plan the Christmas tree for her class in the mill district; now to lend her a new book, and again to read an old one with her; now to help her make out her seed list for the spring planting, and again to carry over a magazine article or a pamphlet utterly confuting some of her heretical horticultural beliefs. There could be no doubt that Dorothea would miss him if he married. However, that was Dorothea's business, not hers, not Mary Ivison's, wild to get her brother's household off her hands and to return to India.

Meantime, an unbelievable thing was happening. Fenwick was going to sing. He had had a good voice in his youth, but Mary had not heard it since her return. He had told her, with a look of incredulity, that she should not have asked so foolish a question, that he had long ago given up singing. And yet there he stood beside the piano, on the stool of which Gladys Grant was seated, deliberately clearing his throat and preparing to sing something out of the old German songbook of their youth. Catching Mary's eye, stern and incredulous, fixed upon him, he had the grace to change color and to say that he was merely about to show Miss Grant the old setting of a song of Heine's which she had never heard.

It was a warm evening for October, and the clear, mellow baritone floated out through the open window. Mary could not forbear wondering whether Dorothea, reading aloud to her father in the library beyond the connecting

lawns, felt the amazement that she, Mary Ivison, felt at that unaccustomed sound.

Ivison was moved to walk home with his neighbors that evening—an attention that he had never before bestowed upon them. It was a wonderful, moonlight night; he had said to Mary, as they stood at the front door for intimate farewells:

"Let us walk as far as Mrs. Altschuler's with them, Mary; it's too beautiful a night to waste indoors."

But Mary had replied dryly that she felt no need of exercise, that autumnal evenings were notoriously deceptive, and that the night air of her native land always gave her neuralgia. And then she had watched them down the terrace, down the long path to the street, and had seen them turn toward the Altschulers'—two and two. When Fenwick returned, he was humming the song he had sung for Gladys, the ecstatically grateful, "*Aus meinen Thränen spriessen—*"

Before the end of the week not only Mary Ivison, but most of the other inhabitants of the picturesque and prosperous suburb of Green Notch, New Jersey, were aware of the fact that Mr. Fenwick Ivison seemed to be renewing his youth under the tutelage of Miss Gladys Grant. He was teaching her to ride horseback, an accomplishment that she did not possess, and for which the wandering roads of the hills and valleys beyond the village seemed particularly adapted; he had taken up tennis again, coming out early from the city each afternoon in order to play a set before dinner.

When Mary, who was not altogether satisfied with the situation, despite her desire to shake from her feet the dust of Green Notch, spoke grimly to him of the possible results of violent exercise upon middle-aged hearts and arteries, he actually lost for the moment his easy-going, debonair air, and ejac-



*With arms akimbo, she cakewalked down the decorous parlor, singing the words in her thin, amusing, little voice.*

ulated: "Middle-aged!" with astonishment and some alarm. But he stole a quick look into the long hall mirror at the same time, and was reassured. The ugly, menacing word was far from fitting him, lithe, active, clear-eyed, and ruddy—to that comfortable fact he would take his path!

And Mary, perceiving the look and making interpretation of it so faithful that one might have supposed she had learned the art of second-sight among

her mourned East Indians, shrugged her shoulders mentally, so to speak, and said in her heart: "Well, so be it! I'm going to put this thing through. Since he thinks he is young enough, and since she apparently thinks he is young enough, he might exactly as well marry her. Behold Mary the matchmaker!"

And, with only the least echo of a sigh for the lovely lady fading to middle life across the lawn, with her round of sweet, small duties and little, faintly

colored pleasures, she set herself to work to bring about the mating of Fenwick Ivison and Gladys Grant. She seemed ably seconded by both the unconscious objects of her conspiracy.

Green Notch had fallen victim to the dancing craze the season before, but Fenwick had then been as little moved by it as Dorothea, or Mary herself. Now he followed where Gladys' flying feet led; he began, like that young maiden, to value his friends chiefly for the condition and the proportions of their floors. Mary resolutely kept back all comment after her single observation on arteriosclerosis. She even succeeded in holding her eyebrows level, despite their almost uncontrollable inclination upward, when he announced one evening that he was going down to the Glanzers' to dance; he was going to call for Gladys Grant and run her down in his machine. But after he had gone, Mary uttered a great sigh.

"The Glanzers!" she exclaimed. "The daughter of mother's old housemaid! And the Newark saloon keeper she succeeded in capturing! What would the dear woman say? Even Heaven can't have made her democratic enough to bear such a thought with equanimity. I wonder what Dorothea would think?"

The desire actually to know drove her across the lawn. Dorothea was playing backgammon with the colonel, who was irritated at a certain absent-mindedness he discovered in her game.

"The Glanzers?" Dorothea smiled. "Oh, that's nothing. Almost every one goes there—it's such a jolly, big house! And Mrs. Glanzer has given a lovely reredos to St. Peter's-on-the-Hill in memory of her mother. They had to take her into the altar guild after that, and the altar guild is the stepping-stone to heaven, in Green Notch."

"Have you ever been to her house?" demanded Mary curtly.

"Oh, yes!" was Dorothea's tranquil reply. "For guild meetings. She has

never asked me to anything else, to tell the truth."

"Because, of course, she knew well enough that you would refuse!"

"How can you be so sure, dear? Haven't you just said that Fen was there at this minute, dancing the turkey trot?" laughed Dorothea.

And then the colonel took up the theme of the country's swift descent to destruction, thanks to the removing of social barriers.

"Gad, ma'am," he said fiercely to Mary, "when I fought to preserve the Union, I thought it was to be something worth preserving! It might have been better to let it go, ma'am, then. At least we would have been disintegrated by our own kind, by gentlemen of chivalry and of ideals, and not merely by taking a lot of riffraff to our bosoms."

And Mary marked the tact and grace with which Dorothea turned the current of his thoughts to happier channels, and finally sent him up to bed feeling that it might have been worth while, after all, to fight for the Union.

"Dorothea, you're wonderful!" said Mary, when the old gentleman had gone.

Dorothea flushed slightly. The little wave of color revealed to Mary what she had not before noted—that the fine modeling of her friend's face was visible through the flesh as it never is beneath the curved flesh of youth. She thought of Gladys' babyish roundness of cheek, with its soft allurements; when age had begun to chisel down to its underlying structure, would there be revealed, she wondered, anything so beautiful as Dorothea's face afforded? She supposed not! She doubted much whether the stern, fine ideals of the gentlewoman dwelt beneath Gladys' mop of yellow curls, and she felt in some dim way that facial modeling and bony structure were obscurely connected with inborn aristocracy. But,

after all, she didn't much care, she told herself. Only let Fenwick make haste with his wooing, and let her get back to India!

To aid him, she invited Gladys—alone, for her aunt and uncle were in town for the theater—to dinner the next evening. And she dozed discreetly over her knitting while the girl played accompaniments for Fen's singing.

"Your long suit is classical music, isn't it?" the pianist interrupted the performance to remark. "Lovely, of course—all that Schumann and Schubert stuff. But have you got anything of Victor Herbert's? No? Well, did you ever hear Fay Templeton sing 'Honey, does yuh lub yuh lamb'? It's the first public singing I remember hearing—I was ever so little a thing! My, but she could sing!"

She sprang to her feet, and, with arms akimbo, cakewalked down the decorous parlor, singing the words in her thin, amusing, little voice. And Fenwick sat and laughed and applauded, his eyes brightened by the sheer impudent charm of her youth! Mary gulped down her rage and disgust. What creatures men were, to be sure!

Fen walked home with their guest, of course. It took him forty-five minutes to accomplish the stroll of a quarter of a mile and return.

"Surely," cried Mary to herself, as she heard from her bedroom the turning of his key in the lock, "he has proposed and been accepted, and has insured himself the lifelong felicity of hearing 'Honey, does yuh lub yuh lamb?' every night of his existence."

But Fenwick gave no sign of any such happy outcome to his stroll. He ate his breakfast with a somewhat absent air, to be sure; and Mary thought she heard him humming his inamorata's favorite melody as he put on his overcoat and prepared for a dash to the

seven-fifty-eight. But he made no announcement of importance.

That afternoon he telephoned out to Mary that he was remaining in town to dinner. It was not an unprecedented happening during the years of Mary's housekeeping for him, and she was, on the whole, rather glad to receive it. It would give her the opportunity she desired to hurry to town herself to attend a session of the World's Convention of Foreign Missionaries, now assembled in New York. She countermanded dinner; she would snatch a bite with a sister missionary at the hotel near the church where the convention was in session.

She hurried to the train, and there she met a pretty bundle of light hair, brown eyes, pink cheeks, artificial flowers, low-cut bodice, thin-clad ankles, exaggerated garments, and undeniable charm—Miss Gladys Grant. Miss Grant, to whom even the briefest solitude was insupportable, rejoiced vivaciously over her friend's appearance.

"Perhaps you are in for the same thing as I?" she suggested, after she had expressed her gratitude to the Providence that had rescued her from an hour and three minutes of loneliness.

"I hardly think so," said Mary, smiling a little grimly. "What is your party?"

"Why, Mr. Ivison has asked me to dine with him at Bobskin's. You know—it's a restaurant that an ex-policeman—an ex-strong-arm-squad man runs."

"Is it respectable?" demanded Miss Ivison fiercely.

"I don't know, I'm sure," was the comfortable response. "It's where the Adairs are dancing this week. Don't you love Mrs. Alastair Adair's dancing?"

"I have never seen it," replied Mary. "Is—Fenwick— Who is chaperoning this expedition?" she added.

"No one, I guess, if you aren't," was





*"She shall have her little dance!" he said, and, putting his napkin down beside his plate, he rose.*

the dimpling answer. "Don't look so horrified, Miss Mary! I begged Mr. Ivison to take me. I don't feel as if I needed a chaperon when I'm with him—he's so splendid, don't you think?"

"He's very good in his way," retorted Mary, "but no man is so good that it is worth while for a young girl to be seen alone with him in a joint

like this precious one you're telling me of."

"Well, to tell you the truth, he wasn't terribly keen on taking me, but he said he thought it had better be he than some one else."

"I dare say that was true enough. But since I'm in town, I'll join you, if you don't mind. Did your aunt know where you were going?"

"Aunt Anna is in Philadelphia today. The National Suffrage Convention, you know," Gladys elucidated. "And I think it's perfectly fine you're coming to Bobskin's—that is, if you're quite sure you wouldn't rather be doing something else."

"I'm quite sure," was Mary's self-denying answer.

She ate a highly spiced dinner at a table from which was visible, through a haze of smoke, the gyrations of a crowd of men and women between the courses of their meal. Gladys had instantly "spotted" her admired professional dancers, and she talked in excited whispers about them. Then she began to tap her own little feet beneath the table, and to plead, with eloquent eyes, for Fenwick to give her a turn through the crowded rooms. Fenwick could not resist the brown, bright glances.

"She shall have her little dance!" he said, and, putting his napkin down beside his plate, he rose.

"Oh, you are a perfect darling!" gurgled Gladys, in delight.

"There is," said Mary to herself, as she watched them, "no fool like an old fool. He is certainly heels over head in love with her, to be able to endure this for her! Well, if they'd only settle the business, and let me be off! I suppose the first baby would put a little sense into her pretty, empty noddle. Poor Fen!"

But that night left the romance no farther advanced than before; a calamity due, Miss Ivison felt, to her presence. He might have proposed and been accepted but for the restraints imposed by her grim society. Heavens, though! What a place to propose in! Mary had some sympathy with sentiment, forced in these degenerate days to declare itself in such surroundings.

There could be no fault alleged against the stage set for the next meeting of the pair of lovers, as she called

them to herself. It was moonlight—such moonlight! It poured in floods of celestial radiance upon the hills and valleys about Green Notch. It lent a fairy witchery to every familiar thing. And there was a hay ride to Miller's Mount—a diversion organized by the lively Mrs. Glanzer, to be sure, and as such not in full harmony with the night of radiance and beauty; but still a hay ride, a moon, an old-fashioned tavern at the end for a dance and supper. Mary could remember when that combination of circumstances had spelled romantic possibilities for her, also!

But Fenwick, when he arrived home at three o'clock in the morning, as the village-hall clock was striking the hour, did not call out to her that he had been made the happiest of men. Nor did he mention it the next morning over the matutinal muffin. Instead, he said, somewhat irritably:

"I hope I can get to sleep in some sort of decent season to-night. I'm tired out."

Vain hope! The indefatigable Mrs. Glanzer and the "younger set" of Green Notch were bound upon a coon hunt that night. Fenwick, with mingled feelings, found himself numbered among the younger set. He rose a little stiffly from the dinner table, and sighed as he made his way to the coat rack.

"Why do you go, if you're tired?" asked the sensible Mary, but he immediately declared that he wasn't tired at all, and that if one thing filled him with more enthusiasm than another it was the prospect of being motored out into the hills to the region in which it was reported that a coon had been recently seen, and to hear the merry baying of the hounds endeavoring to dislodge it from its fastnesses. It was a party especially organized for the benefit of Miss Grant, who, having been born and reared exclusively in Chicago, had never

yet had the thrilling experience of a coon hunt.

As Fenwick left the house that evening, upon pleasure bent, Mary kindly followed him to the front door. She felt sorry that his middle-aged wooing should be such a strenuous one; it was hard on him; she would be glad, for his sake as well as for her own, when it was over. Once he and Gladys were married, all this sort of nonsense would cease, of course! But would it? There was Irene Glanzer, securely enough married, to be sure, but never, never still. What a wife! What a life!

She turned her glance instinctively, as she stood for a moment at the door with Fenwick, toward the Carruths' home. The shades had not yet been drawn. The library lay flooded in rosy light from the fire, and from a warmly shaded lamp on the table. The colonel, his silver head bright against the dark leather of his chair, arranged the backgammon board on the stand before him; Dorothea, tall and slim and graceful, with the repose of a slender, deeply rooted tree in every swaying motion, crossed the room to pull down the curtains. It was a picture of peace. Mary fancied she heard Fenwick sigh as he turned his eyes away and set out whither love and pleasure called.

The next night Mary was giving a dinner to some of their own contemporaries and friends at home, and Fenwick was perforce excluded from the more furious pace of Gladys' set. She heard him talking with a sort of avidity to Doctor Thurlow about a new book of Lucas'; it occurred to her that Fen, once a constant reader, had not opened a book, so far as she knew, since the advent of the young enchantress. He spoke hungrily now.

"Oh, well," she comforted herself, "he can read to her when they are married. She may develop quite a nice taste in literature, who can tell?"

And at that very moment she heard

Doctor Thurlow declaring with most emphatic mien: "If a man hasn't the love of books established in him before he's fifteen, he will never have it! Don't tell me—I know!"

Then followed evenings of dancing wherever the floors and the hospitality endured; and evenings of rehearsal for the pageant the energetic Mrs. Glanzer was organizing for the Mill District Settlement House; and evenings of dining in town at places similar to Bobskin's. Mary thought that Fenwick was losing his color, his lightness of step, his brightness of eye, under the exaggerated dose of gayety he was undergoing. And one night—it was a Saturday—as she watched for him, after the universal habit of the home-staying sex, she saw him come slowly through the misty twilight, walking like an old man, almost. Her heart misgave her. Had that girl—that wretched little brainless combination of India-rubber muscles and abundant red-blood corpuscles—had she dared to play fast and loose with Mary Ivison's brother? He walked slowly—like a disappointed man! But, no—he had paused before the colonel's; he was hesitating; he had taken a resolution; he was entering.

By and by there was the tinkle of the telephone bell. Fenwick's voice saluted her, low, whispered, in the manner of a conspirator.

"Polly," he said, reverting to the nomenclature of thirty years before, "I'm over at the colonel's. Dorothea says for you to come over to dinner, too. I'm not coming home until all danger of being called up for any lark is safely over. I want to get to bed to-night!"

"Tell Dorothea I'll be over at once," answered Mary. And to the servants she said mysteriously that neither she nor Mr. Ivison would be at home that evening, or available by telephone, should any one call either of them up.

And she sped, with a guilty, joyful sense, across the lawn and through the side door of the Carruths'.

"It's the one sane house left in Green Notch," said Fenwick to her, taking her scarf. "Nobody will think of calling up here for volunteers for a hay ride, a minstrel show, or a tango supper."

"That's so," agreed Mary.

But Dorothea sighed a little as she smiled.

"And do you think you are paying us a compliment?" she asked.

Fenwick looked up to answer her with emphasis. He kept on looking. It would seem, Mary thought, that he had never really seen her before.

It was a beautiful evening—quiet, warm, merry. The colonel told anecdotes of a great past; Dorothea told a few anecdotes of a humorous, interesting present. There was discussion of books; books were appealed to in the heat of argument, were handled, read, delighted in. There was the colonel's backgammon.

"Will you wait up a few minutes, Dorothea? I have something I want to say to you after I have put Mary safely under lock and key," said Fenwick to his hostess, when Mary finally declared that she really must go home. Dorothea looked at him with deep questioning in her eyes. So did Mary, for that matter, but that he did not notice. He was still staring at Dorothea, as if for the first time he really beheld her.

"Why, of course," she said, after a moment.

Mary said nothing, as her brother took her across the lawn. She supposed he was going to begin again his silly, youthful habit of confiding his love affairs to Dorothea.

"Don't forget that you're sleepy, and that Dorothea probably is, too," she commanded him, a little crossly, as she closed the door.

But it was after midnight when he came in, as she knew by all the clocks in the town and the house.

At breakfast he looked fresh and almost rosy. He had been out for a walk up the ravine, he announced as he fell upon bacon and eggs with appetite.

"With Gladys?" inquired Mary acidulously.

"No; with Dorothea," was his cheerful reply.

Mary's coffee spoon clattered as it fell. She faced him dumbly. He laughed.

"You do well to look thunderstruck, my dear," he said. "It is a miracle—but it is true. She will——"

"But what have you done with Gladys?" cried Mary, torn between joy and indignation.

"I have enshrined her forever in my gratitude for tiring me out so that I simply had to come home for a rest," he replied obscurely. "And for giving me a standard by which to measure beauty. I don't think I ever really saw Dorothea until last night," he added.

"That's all very well; but Gladys——" For Mary had a conscience in regard to her sex.

"My dear sister, Gladys' mate is at present adorning the fence of some historic college yard, flaunting the sophomoric privilege of smoking his pipe in public, or doing something equally important. Don't ask me to try to usurp his place; even though I was bent upon doing it, perhaps, myself—until last night. Until last night," he repeated tenderly.

Mary struck a sharp note on the bell.

"Delia," she commanded, "bring the *Christian Missionary Field* from my desk, please. I want," she added to her brother, "to see who is the society's secretary for India now. Oh, Fen, how glad I am! How glad I am going to be!"



# The Day of Retribution

By Ruth Wilson Herrick

Author of "Helga," "Courting Widow O'Harahan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

THERE'S a fly! I should think," observed Miss Stansfield to Elizabeth critically, "I should really think your father would get his screens in, instead of puttering out there over those iris."

Let it be understood from the first that Miss Stansfield was no ordinary dressmaker. She was a personage. In the first place, there were ten families for whom she sewed, no more, no less; and if one of these was removed, by death or otherwise, Stacy majestically culled over her waiting list and filled in the vacancy, not in the order of first arrival, but according to the dictates of her personal taste. Hence the spurned were disgraced before the eyes of the town children, and the chosen ten regarded as a sort of aristocratic coterie.

They all called her "Stacy" because when she came she was as much a part of the home circle as the family cat or the sugar bowl, and she came two weeks out of each season to each of her families. Not that she sewed all the time! Bless you, no—she visited! Stacy always had the spare room—although she never sewed there, preferring the dining room to any other location, or moving her sewing machine with her wherever she wished to be—and sometimes made her famous

sponge cake for tea, or went to Ladies' Aid with mother, or washed her hair. She was more, like a visiting auntie come to town than a seamstress.

Speaking of hair, that was one thing about Stacy that had always fascinated Elizabeth. Stacy had a switch, her own aureole having dwindled somewhat in the course of forty, fifty—oh, no one knew just how many odd years! The switch was a wispy, thinnish tail of hair, and she put it on in the most curious way! When you were a little girl, did you ever like to hang over the foot of the bed, in the spare room, and watch the visitor dress? Elizabeth did more than that. She snooped. She snooped when the visitors were downstairs at breakfast, sniffed at their talcum powder, rubbed her own nose with their soft chamois skins, looked to see how the seams of their night-gowns were finished inside. In this way, Elizabeth had collected quite a bit of valuable information in regard to current customs.

But—most ghastly of experiences!—Stacy had once upon a time entered the bedroom just as Elizabeth was encircling herself with the ribbon girdle she had found lying on the rocking-chair. Now, Stacy was rotund—yes, she was overample of proportion—and the article just mentioned was contrastingly





*Poor Elizabeth sniffed the air wistfully as she hung out of the window of the spare room,*

ridiculous on Elizabeth, who was a mere slip of a thing. Perhaps it was that contrast that helped to irritate Miss Stansfield. But she was always correcting and criticizing little girls. At any rate, Elizabeth had always remembered her suggestions upon that embarrassing occasion.

She thought of them now as Stacy unpinning her switch and coiled it, snakelike, around the hair receiver; thought of it uncomfortably and yet irritably, too, when Stacy made that remark about the fly. What if her father did choose to putter in his garden instead of putting in his screens? Stacy was always correcting other people's conduct.

"What did you say?"

As a matter of fact, Elizabeth had not said anything. That was just the trouble. A silent, deep-eyed child, she gave the impression of seeing everything that went on and making up her mind about it. One knew always that Elizabeth had opinions, often—oh, very often—antagonistic to one's own, and yet she seldom expressed them. It was that peculiar characteristic of the

child's that was so unaccountably maddening to Stacy. She liked to come out in the open and argue—if her opponent was a child, to dictate. Elizabeth never gave her the opportunity. She kept her own counsel and looked really unutterable things out of her blue, deep eyes instead.

Poor Elizabeth sniffed the air wistfully as she hung out of the window of the spare room, looking down at her father, for it was so sweet and warm and tender with spring, and it smelled just like the pale, greenish sprouts of the iris plants pushing up through the moist soil. Swallows were building up under the white eaves, twining the long straws around the tin water pipe and twittering happily while they worked. One flew out in a long, graceful swoop, up into the blue sky—Oh, why couldn't she go outdoors, too, on such a rapturous afternoon when the spring in the air just made one frenzied inside?

The reason was obvious. Stacy wanted to fit Elizabeth's new voile, and instead of doing so at once and having it over with, so that Elizabeth could go out and play, there she stood and combed and combed at her hair! It was enraging! All the more so because Elizabeth knew Stacy was deliberately dallying "to teach little girls patience."

"Stacy! Oh, Stacy!" Elizabeth heard her mother's voice from downstairs.

"Run and see what she wants," Stacy commanded.

"What? What, mother?" Elizabeth, from the window sill, called back lustily, without moving.

"Oh, Stacy!" Her mother's gentle voice again.

"Run!" Stacy spoke as if she were driving nails with a hatchet. "Run, and see what she wants."

Elizabeth ran, conferred with the voice down in the front hall, and re-

turned to report that Mrs. Salisbury was down in the parlor calling, and wouldn't Stacy come down? The Salisburys also were one of Miss Stansfield's families.

"I guess"—Stacy hovered irresolutely over the dresser—"I guess I'll not wait to do my hair." She moved toward the door and glanced back at her switch, then wound up her own locks into a knot, poked a pin through it, and went into the hall.

"May I go outdoors and play, then?" Elizabeth's question was most politely worded.

"Well!" How Stacy grudged that permission!

Elizabeth, however, lost no time in joining her father out in the garden. She trundled the kittens about in his wheelbarrow when he was not using it, and tickled their pink noses with fresh angleworms, and spent an afternoon of perfect enjoyment. But—

Mrs. Salisbury was just going, was driving through the gate, when Stacy's head appeared at the window of the spare room.

"Elizabeth! Come here immediately!"

Oh, that fitting! But, no! Something worse than that was the matter. Stacy was standing rampant, with her back against the dresser, when Elizabeth reached the spare room.

"What have you done with my switch?"

"Why, I haven't touched it," Eliza-



*looking down at her father, for it was so sweet and warm and tender with spring.*

beth answered, with the most surprised inflection.

"It is gone."

"But I don't know anything about it."

"Elizabeth!"

"I don't!"

"Elizabeth!"

"I haven't seen it, Stacy! The last I saw of it it was right on the dresser, where you left it when you went down to see Mrs. Salisbury. Cross my heart, Stacy!"

"You left the room after I did," reminded Stacy insinuatingly.

"Yes, but I went right out into the garden. I never touched it."

"Remember I caught you snooping once before."

That shot went home.

"But why should I take it?" Elizabeth cried, hot and stinging with the injustice of Stacy's conclusions. "It doesn't match my hair any better than it does yours."

They stood and just looked at each other after that, Stacy big, accusing, and very angry; Elizabeth white with rage, her eyes as black as two shoe buttons.

"I shall tell your mother," said Stacy at last.

Elizabeth made no reply.

"I have never told her about the other time."

Still no word from Elizabeth.

"I think," concluded Stacy very grandly, "I think she should know."

She held out her hand to Elizabeth, but the child's arms hung, unbending as toasting forks, at her sides. Stacy was forced to content herself with merely going first, as they marched downstairs.

Now, even before they went down, Elizabeth knew exactly what would happen, and foresaw her mother's attitude. All of the ten mothers in Stacy's coterie realized that she was a "per-

fect snap." The first thing she did when she started to sew was to call for the left-over clothes from the summer or winter before. These she remodeled and touched up with a pucker here or a drape there and a new button or two so that they looked "in style." Then, after grave consultation, the new dresses were planned.

And Stacy brought down the extravagant mothers to a proper realization of economy when they soared too high—why, it was said that Stacy wouldn't let little Virginia Cartwright's mother buy her a velvet coat; Stacy made her a dark cloth one instead—or incited the overeconomical wives to purchase a trifle more lavishly. Every one in town knew that once Stacy had herself gone downtown and ordered a bit of real duchesse lace sent out for Mrs. Salisbury's new black silk, and had had it charged to Mr. Salisbury, who was, in truth, more than able to afford it. But poor, timid little Mrs. Salisbury never wore that gown without a pang of conscience and a feeling that a frill of imitation Val would have done just as well.

In short, Stacy loved to manage. She threw on it. And to a busy mother, it was no slight thing to have the entire burden of the feminine wardrobe lifted from her shoulders. Therefore, it behooved one to "keep on the right side of Stacy."

The situation of the lost switch, being put up, then, to Elizabeth's mother just as she was laying the table for tea, worked upon her just as Elizabeth had known it would. It was written all over her face, "Whatever happens, I mustn't lose Stacy," and the question of possible injustice to her child was entirely secondary to the graver fear of struggling once more with her own sewing.

"Why, it surely must be somewhere," she argued helplessly. "Elizabeth, you come up and help me look."



"What—what is that?" Elizabeth's mother cried.

In the thick of the search, she whispered to Elizabeth: "Don't say anything. Just let it go, and I'll make it up to you some way, dearie." Whereby Elizabeth gathered that her mother did not share Stacy's views as regarded the odd disappearance of the switch.

Elizabeth obeyed her mother, and said nothing. But her soul was hot with indignation and injustice, so hot that her eyes burned with it, and the resentment against Stacy that had been long in the bud blossomed bitterly into fierce hatred. The inequality of the fight, the attitude of submission that she was forced to take, were gall to her rebellious, independent spirit, and nothing but the realization of her mother's situation and her deep and

passionate adoration for that gentle, meek soul kept Elizabeth in check.

In spite of the fires of anger, she was aware of a keen curiosity to know where the switch had really hidden itself. Could Stacy have put it out of sight purposely? No, she was hardly as black a criminal as that! Besides, her pride would scarcely have allowed her to go about with her own hair as a mere pimple on her head, just to shame Elizabeth. But where could the switch be?

It was not on the dresser or in any of the drawers; it had not blown onto the floor, either under the dresser or the bed; it was not in Stacy's suit case. Nothing else was missing or disturbed in the entire room. Deep mystery hung

over the whole thing—except in Stacy's eyes, and there one saw that a solution had been reached. She did not join in the search. She kept her eyes upon Elizabeth as the child searched dutifully high or low, as bidden by her agitated mother.

But Stacy's switch could not be found. The result was that Elizabeth's mother bought her a new one and hushed the matter up as gently as she could. She also bought Elizabeth a tiny new ring, which did not in the least compensate a rebellious spirit. Stacy finished her sewing, and went on to the Salisburys', her new hair—which matched much better—coiled upon her head after the manner of the old.

All summer Elizabeth prayed for the day of retribution. She did not care—much—what other people thought. It worried her very little when Bessie Salisbury told her that Stacy had said over there that she "couldn't stand that little chit of an Elizabeth." All Elizabeth wanted was that opportunity to make Stacy, Stacy herself, see herself in the wrong.

The autumn sewing week was not pleasant. It was warm, and Elizabeth's father, against whom Stacy really had some case for "dillydallying," had just got around to having the house painted. He had intended to have it done in June, but the iris and hollyhocks had had to be seen to, and he never had had time to call up the painters, and so, to make a long, procrastinating story short, the painters arrived the first week in October, along with Stacy.

She was not displeased. She never had liked the color of the house; and now she had a chance to offer her advice. The sewing was postponed for a time while she visited and consulted with the head painter on the subject of French grays.

Elizabeth hated it. The pretty vines all had to come down just when they were turning red; the screens all had

to come out just when the flies were thickest; the big nest the swallows had built in the spring was torn loose from its moorings.

Her father brought the nest in as a curiosity.

"What—what is that?" Elizabeth's mother cried.

"Where?"

"There! Look! Look, Stacy! Elizabeth! Elizabeth! It's Stacy's switch!"

Very deftly woven and interwoven it was in among the straw and grasses, a soft interlining that the swallows had made for their fluffy feathers out of Stacy's brown, fine hair. The hollow was small and cozy, and the hair made it silky to the touch of Elizabeth's little fist, which she cuddled down inside.

Her soul was throbbing with a wild, exultant joy. The day of retribution was at hand, and she stood cleared in the sight of God, man, and Stacy. The secret satisfaction of triumph over an enemy was hers, also. She felt it, and so did Stacy. Would Stacy apologize? Elizabeth knew instinctively that she would not, that her pride would never permit her to humble herself.

"How do you suppose those swallows ever got hold of it?" her father was asking.

Stacy's eyes met Elizabeth's. Would that little chit say, "I told you so?" Elizabeth said nothing. She merely looked!

No, Stacy's was not a disposition to apologize. She turned on Elizabeth's father.

"How did they get in?" she sputtered hotly. "The window was open, and you were putting out there over your iris, and hadn't put your screens in. I suppose, I really suppose, they just flew in and carried it off from the dresser through the open window. I know the screens weren't in, because there was a fly in the room. I spoke about it, do you remember, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Elizabeth.



# The Good Old Doctor

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Gotrelly's First Capture," "For to Admire," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

MARK COTRELLY has always been a firm, though unacknowledged, believer in the thing known as a "hunch." A certain timidity in courting the scorn that society visits upon all superstitions except its own kept him silent about his faith. When he admitted it at all, it was under the disguise of "intuition" or "premonition" or some such more respectable word. Nevertheless, to himself he used the less dignified term, and on a certain afternoon in November, as he followed a rather badly dressed, rather awkwardly gaited man up and down elevated stairs and through a dingy East Side street, he told himself he was obeying a hunch.

The particular objects of Mark's quest at this time were opium smugglers. In spite of all that the department could do, in spite of all the confiscated outfits, in spite of supplies seized in every Chinatown in every city of the United States, and from isolated, innocent-looking laundries and shops in towns too small to boast a Chinese quarter, all the evidence still seemed to point to one conclusion—that all who wanted to smoke opium had no difficulty in finding opium to smoke.

A warning had been sent to the customshouse to the effect that on the steamship *Prinz Heinrich*, just in from an early-autumn cruise in southern waters, there was a considerable amount of the contraband stuff. But search had not revealed it. The ship's authorities

had not been, as sometimes, stiff; they had not stood upon their right, as officers of a vessel flying German colors, to have all sorts of red tape unwound before allowing the boat to be searched. But with all their genial readiness and helpfulness, nothing had been accomplished. No seaman's bunk, no petty officer's quarters, had revealed an ounce of opium, even to the argus-eyed members of the searching force, even to the prying, gimlet gaze of young Mr. Cotrelly.

And yet Mark was not satisfied. The conviction preyed upon him that somewhere upon that boat, just in from Colon, where opium was so easy to come by, there was stored a quantity of the drug. It was that irrational and unsupported view which kept him hanging around the neighborhood of the *Prinz Heinrich's* dock for a day or two after she had unloaded all her cargo. It was that belief which had caused him to feel, on this very afternoon, the day before she sailed again, as he loitered under a saloon awning on West Street, that there was something suspicious in the manner of a certain man who came off the boat.

He was an undersized fellow, though stockily built; Teuton or Scandinavian, by his red-blond coloring, the high, rough modeling of his cheek bones, the width between his blue eyes. He had carried, coming out, what seemed to be the parts of a set washbasin; Mark watched him surrender them for in-

spection to the customs guard on duty at the entrance to the *Prinz Heinrich's* pier.

Apparently there was nothing about them to excite the suspicion of that somewhat somnolent watchdog of the government. But Mark was not satisfied and reasoned rapidly enough as to the situation. Here was one of the working force of mechanics that every big steamer carries taking into the city for repair or replacement some part of the ship's furnishings that had been broken or put out of commission in some way. It was perfectly legitimate, of course. Ship's plumbers, ship's carpenters, were always taking parts of their machinery ashore to be fitted; but they had been discovered thus unobtrusively removing dutiable goods quite often enough to render not quite ridiculous such attention as Mark now felt disposed to give the blond man.

He followed the mechanic on foot for an hour or two, as it seemed. The weight of the pieces of the broken bowl that he carried carelessly did not seem to bother him. He stopped in numerous little waterside shops to buy of the stock of strange, gaudy, little trinkets with which seafaring men are accustomed to represent to their relatives at home the progress in arts and crafts of the lands they visit. He entered many grogeries.

He seemed rather a dull person, and paid no particular attention to Mark, despite the latter's coincident appearance in the shops and saloons that he patronized. Finally when he had penetrated somewhat into the interior of the city, he left the broken bowl at a plumber's establishment; Mark heard him give the perfectly proper and natural order in regard to furnishing the *Prinz Heinrich* with another of the same sort and was forced to admit to himself that so far his intuition had not resulted in much.

But by that time he had rather formed

the habit of following the man, and he kept doggedly on. In a crosstown horse car—the sole surviving horse car of the civilized world, probably—he went with the gentleman across the city. The extremely strong Swedish brandy in which the seagoing person had indulged in the waterside saloons had considerably befogged his intellect, and he dozed and jerked uncomfortably as the car went haltingly upon its slow, impeded way. Nevertheless, he woke with admirable punctuality when they reached Second Avenue, and, leaving the car, he climbed the elevated stairs to take an uptown train.

Mark followed with the lack of concealment that had seemed to him justifiable since he had first diagnosed the fellow as extremely dull. He did, however, take the precaution to station himself in the car, or rather on the car platform, behind the one which his quarry entered. The plumber from the *Prinz Heinrich* sank immediately into a vacant seat close to the end window and Mark again watched his slumbers until a station in the fifties was reached, at which, beneath the conductor's rough shake, he awoke again.

He seemed more stupefied now than before. The conductor had to shout at him twice: "Hi, you! This is the station you want," before he staggered to his feet and lurched out. Once down the stairs, however, he seemed to take his bearings, for, after a moment's pause and a prolonged stare into all the quarters of the compass, he started due east. Mark, still guided by his thus far discredited intuition, trotted along behind him.

It was a sordid enough street, although the fact that it was wide and that only a few tall tenements reared their shadow-throwing façades upon it, made it a little sunnier and airier than most thoroughfares of the same social standing. The old houses that lined it had fallen upon evil days. For the most

part they had been converted into tenements. Those that had escaped this fate harbored a strange assortment of businesses—fortune tellers, wax-figure makers, costumers. There were many music teachers along the row; almost every third house announced that Professor So-and-so guaranteed the piano in ten lessons, or that, by Professor This-and-that's system of violin instruction, three months produced a perfect fiddler. The streets swarmed with children, for it was just after three o'clock; and from the big brick building at the corner hundreds of little Americans in the making poured noisily and happily into the street. Mark had an eye for all the peculiarities of the neighborhood, even though his chief interest centered in the ship's mechanic.

This personage's course, though apparently intelligible to himself, was less and less steady. He lurched against dilapidated iron fences that inclosed hard, yellow patches of earth that had once been plots of grass; he leaned for a minute against the electric-light post, midway of the block. He jerked his arms as if they were numbed by cold, although the day was warm and sunny. Some of the children hooted at him; some scampered away from him in terror. The genial policeman, whose pleasant task it was to guide the footsteps of the smallest youngsters over perilous car tracks, harshly bade him "take shame to himself" and furthermore to "get a hustle on." But he dragged along more and more uncertainly.

Mark's interest in him as a possible smuggler had given place to a sort of brotherly sympathy for a man overtaken in his cups, and under the impetus of that sympathy he had approached him more closely, when suddenly the foreigner threw up his arms, reeled, and would have sunk to the pavement but for Mark's arms, outstretched to catch him. The policeman came running—all the little children had been safely

convoys across the perilous street of the section; the women lolling at the windows screamed; the hucksters, musically chanting the prices of the vegetables in their carts, stopped their singsong and drew near.

"It doesn't seem like a plain drunk," said Mark to the policeman after one look at the man's darkly empurpled, unconscious face. "You'd better ring for an ambulance, hadn't you? Is there a drug store——" He broke off to look for that asylum for misfortune.

"No, there's no drug store nearer than the corner, but we'll carry him into old Doctor Artgeld's," answered the policeman. He indicated by a nod of his head the house in front of which they stood. It was an unkempt, dilapidated dwelling, but it bore a physician's sign. In fact, it bore several, all of them at the extreme limit of dimness. "Doctor Gustavus Artgeld" was inscribed, in letters once black, upon the windows; it gleamed, in letters once gilt, upon a black tin sign at right angles to the house; it shone, in a state of comparative preservation, upon the doorplate.

The policeman drove back the army of volunteer aids who would have invaded Doctor Gustavus Artgeld's along with him and Mark. He rang the bell imperatively. A young girl opened the door, a slender, startled-looking child, with wide, misty gray eyes and softly banded, pale-gold hair.

"Man in a fit, Miss Greta," announced the policeman, who seemed on commendably intimate terms with his beat. "Grandpa home?"

"No," the girl's voice fluttered. "But bring him in."

She opened a door leading out of the hall, and indicated what seemed to be the doctor's office. Mark and Policeman Deblin bore their burden in and laid it upon a leather-covered lounge with broken springs that stood between a window and the mantel. The policeman, going to the telephone on the dis-

orderly desk, sent in a call for the ambulance, while Mark began fumbling with the man's collar and necktie.

"It's a stroke, I'm afraid," he said.

"Know anything about medicine?" demanded the policeman.

"Not much. I studied it for a year or so. We'd better get everything unfastened that we can."

Meantime, the young girl stood looking affrightedly from the inert hulk upon the lounge to the two men bending over it. Once she asked, in a subdued voice—with what seemed to Mark's ears a slightly foreign accent—if there was anything she could do. When they had told her no, she slipped from the room.

Mark was unfastening the suspenders—very stiff, very gaudy, very new—that secured the man's trousers, when he felt near the waist, beneath the flannel shirt, the outlines of a rectangular, small, hard package. The excitement of his intuition returned upon him. He unfastened the shirt buttons, reached in a hand, and from a pocket sewed upon the inside of the shirt he drew forth a sealed packet not much larger than a sardine box. It was covered with Chinese characters. He gave a little exclamation of triumph and held it up for Policeman Deblin's inspection. At the same time, he drew back his coat and showed his customhouse badge to the other.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said the policeman. "Were you after him?"

"Yep," replied Mark tersely. "I don't know why—I had a hunch."

Mr. Deblin nodded as one to whom this explanation was entirely satisfactory; and then, with a clatter and a clangor, the ambulance from the district hospital drew up before the front door, the young ambulance surgeon entered, made his examination, pronounced the fit apoplectic, stated it as his opinion that it would prove fatal, and that the man would never rally,

made due note of Mark's seizure of the package of opium, helped the policeman carry the body out to the ambulance, and rattled off in that vehicle to have his diagnosis entirely confirmed at the hospital.

Meantime, Mark found himself standing awkwardly in the office. The vague, pretty girl had appeared again, with soft murmurs of sorrow and horror. Mark was about to take his leave of her when the folding doors behind him opened a crack, and a strange, pinched, sick countenance thrust itself through the aperture. Mark was looking in the opposite direction, but the face was reflected in the long, dim, polished mirror between the front windows.

"Ain't the doctor come yet?" demanded the voice, weak and querulous.

"Not yet, Mrs. Ally," answered the girl.

"What for does he say his office hours is from three? It's more than half past now, and I've been waiting since one."

The whole figure had followed the face into the front room now, and Mark thought he had never seen anything so wasted, so horrible, as that collection of skin and bone and rags. In making her way into the room, the woman had widened the opening of the door, and through it he saw that the rear apartment was full of a quiet gathering of patients. There were twelve or fifteen, he could see, and all looked gaunt and poverty-stricken.

"Grandfather will be in soon, now, I think," answered the girl gently. And the woman, still grumbling, withdrew into the back room.

"Your grandfather has a large practice," said Mark, rather for the sake of saying something that would evoke a reply from those soft lips than from actual interest in her grandfather's practice.

"Yes," she replied in her careful, hesitating English. "There are a great



*Suddenly the foreigner threw up his arms, reeled, and would have sunk to the pavement but for Mark's arms, outstretched to catch him.*



many sick people who come to him to be made well. Ah, and such poor people!"

"I suppose, in such a neighborhood, they would inevitably be poor," said Mark.

"They come from every part of the city, I think," answered the girl. "You see, he is so very kind. He charges them so little. And now he does not go out to them any more—my grandfather is quite an old man, sir, more than seventy years old—and they all come to him. He lets them rest here. Upstairs he has two rooms just for them—one for the men, one for the women."

"Oh, runs a sort of hospital or sanitarium, does he?" asked Mark.

"No, I do not think that is it. They do not stay a long time. It is just a sort of resting room for them. Two, three, four hours maybe—and then they go away again, much rested."

Mark stared at her a little dubiously. He had never heard of such an institution before. But the girl herself, with her tranquil, deep, dreamy eyes and the childlike purity of all her lines, was a guarantee for anything that the grandfather might do. He bade her good-by and went out into the hall.

At the same instant there came down the front stairs, with their dingy, torn oilcloth covering, a youngish woman with a thin, highly colored face and cheaply flamboyant clothing. He was glad, somehow, that the little granddaughter withdrew hastily into the office and closed the door before the woman had caught sight of her. He held the outer door open for the woman to pass through. She gave him a bold smile of gratitude, and, as she passed him, a curious, acrid odor saluted his nostrils. Closing the door after her, he stood for a second in the hall, his head aloft, sniffing the air as an animal sniffs the scent of danger or hostility.

"I must be getting monomania," he told himself. "I've cleaned out so many

Chinese opium joints that I'm beginning to smell the stuff everywhere. Yet I'm blessed if——"

Again he sniffed, and then, jamming his hat upon his forehead and shaking his head in bewilderment, he opened the door, passed out into the disorderly street, and set his face toward the elevated station at the end of the block. As he passed before the windows of Doctor Artgeld's house, his eyes sought them. It seemed to him that behind the shabby, dingy, long lace curtains he glimpsed the slender outline of Greta's figure. He was conscious of a sudden rush of tenderness and pity, which he was quite at a loss to explain to himself.

## II.

His fellow employees in the customs department, apprised of Mark's seizure of the package of opium, were inclined to make merry at his expense. They accused him of bad judgment and carelessness in having allowed his quarry to escape him before he had learned whither the ship's plumber was bound. It was all very well to know that opium was still being smuggled in from Panama; but, after all, that was not exactly new. The value of the incident would have lain in the discovery of the person to whom the contraband material was consigned. And as the smuggler had inconsiderately died before reaching his destination, there seemed to be no way of learning what that destination was to have been.

The officers of the *Prinz Heinrich* were most obliging and granted permission for another search of the vessel before she sailed again; they threw what light they could upon the habits of the dead man and furnished Mark with the names of his closest companions. But the closest companions were of clamlike dumbness and of preternatural stupidity. They knew nothing whatever about their friend's private ventures as an

importer. Examination and reexamination brought no light to their dark intelligences. And the *Prins Heinrich* sailed again, minus one of its workmen, leaving Mark no wiser than before as to the person to whom the dead man had been carrying the opium.

He found his thoughts reverting constantly to the dingy offices of Doctor Artgeld; to the group of shabby, forlorn-looking people; to the hollow-cheeked courtesan who had brought down the stairs with her the reminiscent odor of the drug; and, above all, to the innocent-eyed, grave, sweet young girl, who seemed so strange a flower to bloom from out that heap of débris. He wanted to go back there; he wanted to sniff again the air of that hallway; he wanted to meet again the young girl's serious gray eyes. Two or three times he found himself upon the street, lured thither by the hope that he might meet her. He met no one ever so remotely suggesting her. Policeman Deblin, to be sure, remembered him, and gave him cordial greeting, but that seemed a long remove from Greta.

He questioned the policeman concerning the practice of Doctor Artgeld, and the guardian of the law was loud in his praises of the physician.

"Not much style," was his verdict; "not much newfangled nonsense about germs and serums and all those; but good, old-fashioned horse sense, and a heart as big as a barn."

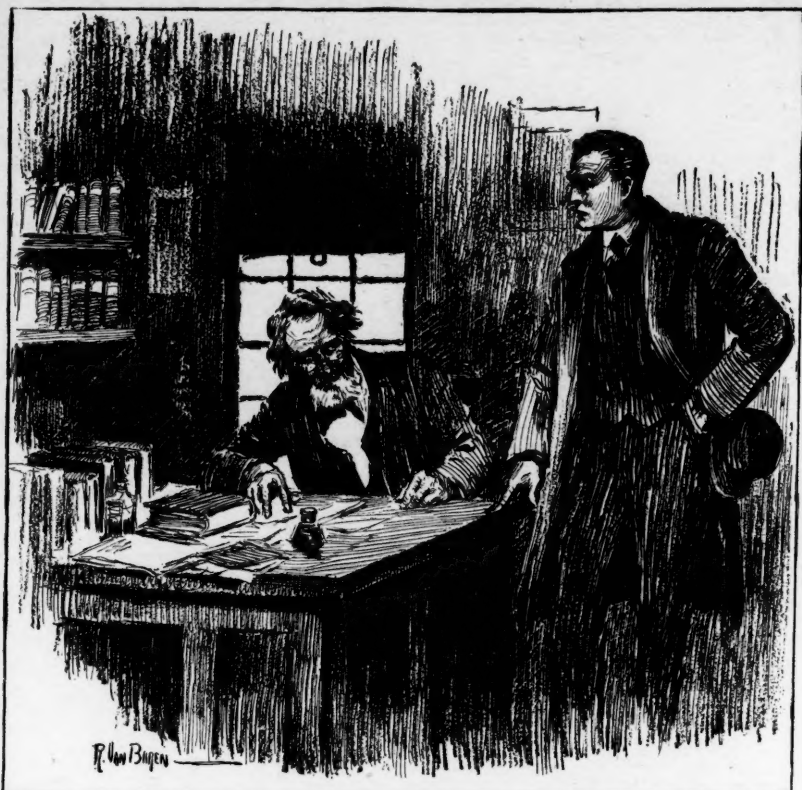
Thus were summed up the policeman's impressions, and he seemed a shrewd enough observer of the men and the happenings upon his beat.

Mark was unable to decide whether it was the restlessness of his baffled detective instinct or the new, sweet pain he had begun to feel that finally decided him that he must again gain admission to the good old doctor's house; have another sight of the derelicts waiting with their dreary patience for their chance to see the doctor; smell again

the heavy, dead air that seemed to lie in layers like dust along the halls and in the rooms; and perhaps, in the midst of it all, catch another glimpse of the girl, fresh and fragrant like a flower new-blown. Whatever the governing motive, he decided to go again to Doctor Artgeld's office.

There was nothing of the invalid about his appearance, but to appear as a man in need of Doctor Artgeld's professional services seemed less remarkable than to come as a customs official or as an admirer of Greta's. Mark debated between nervous symptoms, of the sort that need not be belied by even the most robust look of health, and those of some serious, though hidden, physical disorder. Fortunately, his academic acquaintance with illness was not too slight to permit him to counterfeitsome small signs of disease and to describe them convincingly. Insomnia seemed advisable to him; no one, without rudeness, could contradict a gentleman who complained that he found it impossible to sleep o' nights; whereas it was within the province of a doctor, at any rate, to deny various other claims to the proud title of invalid.

He had hopes that it would be the grave-eyed maiden who would again admit him to the dirty, old house, but it was an attendant more in keeping with the place—a little, old woman, gnarled and wiry, who peered at him out of suspicious black eyes, not unlike a witch's beneath her straggling gray locks. A soiled, collarless bodice of calico displayed her parchmentlike throat, and a big, greasy apron concealed the rest of her attire. She preceded Mark to the waiting room, flapping along the torn oilcloth of the hall in a pair of masculine slippers that looked as if they had been drawn from a rubbish heap. Mark felt it was almost unbearable that Greta should be forced to inhabit the same house with this repulsive old hag.



*"Well, young man, and what can I do for you?" demanded Dr. Artgeld abruptly. He spoke in a deep voice, and with a strong German accent.*

He took his place in the badly lighted waiting room, one of a pale, sodden little group. On the dusty, stained, marble-topped center table stood a gas lamp with a long green tube connecting it with the chandelier above. About it were magazines so old and so dirty that to touch them was beyond the hardihood of the fastidious Mr. Cotrelly. No one else of the waiting-room crowd seemed to have any desire to beguile the tedium of waiting with literature. They sat, for the most part, indifferent to delay, indifferent to one an-

other, absorbed in some dull trance of their own. When, from time to time, the folding doors that effectually barred this room from the office were rolled heavily backward and the doctor appeared in the narrow aperture, there would be a slight ripple of interest, a brightening of dulled eyes, a movement of the heads. But after the next patient in turn had passed into the consulting room, those who remained would all sink back again into their apathy.

Mark had apparently come rather

late, for the old woman ushered no one in after him, and when finally his turn for consultation came, he left it empty. In the consulting room he found a big, untidy old man, with keen eyes looking out through horned spectacles, worn low upon his nose. Mark felt rise up in him a wave of wonder and disgust. How strangely undiscerning must be the invalids who could bear to be ministered to by this sallow-faced old man, whose white hair and uneven white beard were dingy with neglect, whose finger nails were like those of a gardener at the close of the day, and whose linen was gray and spotted!

"Well, young man, and what can I do for you?" demanded Doctor Artgeld abruptly. He spoke in a deep voice, and with a strong German accent. In spite of his general unsavoriness, Mark felt that he was not a person to be lightly deceived; the eyes behind the spectacles were very sharp.

"Well, doctor, I don't look as if there were much the matter with me, do I? But I feel as if there must be something wrong when I can't sleep at night."

"Yes," agreed the doctor. "That generally does mean something wrong. Let me see. What's your name?" He produced from the litter of papers on the top of his desk an ancient black-leather notebook and awaited Mark's reply.

"My name is Simmons, James E. Simmons," declared Mr. Cotrelly glibly.

The big, dirty thumb of the physician felt along the index letters of his memorandum until he found the S. Then he laboriously wrote down in what seemed to be German script the name that Mark had just given him, following it with other items of information, or misinformation, gleaned from the young man.

Mark thought of the physicians' offices with which he was acquainted—bright and dustless, with their neat ar-

ray of paraphernalia, their card catalogues of patients, their positive cheer of cleanliness; and again he wondered what could induce even the very poor to patronize so uninviting a place and so uninviting a person as this. Well, perhaps all this modern fad for sterilization and systemization was pretentious nonsense! Perhaps a wise, slovenly old man like this might know full as much about that mystery, the human body, as all those overpoweringly orderly and aseptic gentlemen! Certainly Doctor Artgeld was keen enough in his questioning of Mark.

"Anything serious?" asked the alleged patient when the queries had all been answered, and old-fashioned thumping and more modern stethoscoping had made their independent reports.

"Nothing serious if you take it in time," replied Doctor Artgeld so solemnly that Mark felt a positive shiver of fear. Was it possible that there was something the matter with him? His new anxiety showed on his face.

"Not if you take it in time," repeated the doctor.

"Diet, exercise, all that sort of thing?" Mark suggested. The old man gave a grunt of disapproval.

"Diet and exercise!" he repeated. "The world has gone mad on diet and exercise! Has not the good God made to grow in the earth all sorts of herbs for a man's healing? When have you known waste in Nature? And wherefore would she be rich in plants whose juices are for medicine and naught else, if man is never to use them? Diet and exercise, bah! They are all right enough to cure the ills of men and women who eat too much and work too little. But where there is illness, there must be medicine to cure."

"But what do you think is the matter with me?" asked Mark, chilled in spite of his conviction of perfect soundness.

Doctor Artgeld smiled enigmatically. "You'd be as wise as you are now if I

should tell you the name of your complaint," he asserted darkly. "Oh, it's nothing for you to get white about—don't I tell you that Nature has her beneficent leaves and roots, her berries and her juices? I will mix you up a little thing here that will fix you as right as ever you were."

Mark began to understand, or thought he did.

"I make it for you cheaper than the drug stores, and purer," the doctor went on. He had uncovered a stone mortar from the litter on his desk and was dropping into it something that looked, to his patient's eyes, like beans. "There isn't a retail drug store in the city I'd trust. Sugar and flour and water are their chief expenses! Oh, it's a tricky business!"

"It is, indeed," agreed Mark wholeheartedly, as he watched the elderly charlatan—for it was thus that he now regarded the doctor—grinding away at the contents of his mortar with a stone pestle.

At that instant the door leading into the hall was flung violently open without the preliminary of a knock. The old woman who had acted as portress to Mark burst through the doorway. The doctor frowned magisterially upon her.

"Why do you not knock?" he demanded in German.

Mark rejoiced that his long-standing acquaintance with the old German cabinetmaker, P. Lecher, had been the means of his familiarizing himself with a tongue of which he had had only a student's knowledge before. The old woman, entirely unmoved by her master's indignation, replied gutturally, also in German.

"Come upstairs at once," she commanded him. "That Helen—you know—she has a fit, like. I got her out of the room. Come you quickly!"

Doctor Artgeld said something only half articulate, but expressive of an-

noyance. He looked sharply at Mark, but the look of surprise and bewilderment which that young gentleman wore was easily ascribable to his lack of knowledge of the language that had been spoken.

"Excuse me. My housekeeper, she tells me that one of my patients is ill upstairs. I go—I return at once. It is nothing, nothing! These women!"

There was a light flurry of footsteps down the stairs; Mark's heart beat a little unevenly at the sound. Greta stood in the office doorway, blanched and fluttering.

"Oh, *grosswater! Grosswater!*"

Then she caught sight of Mark and broke off, a rosy light of recognition overspreading the pallor of her face. She wore a little frock of pink-printed calico, and she looked more flowerlike than even in his recollections. But she went on with her message, which was to the same effect as the housekeeper's. Mark heard the words, although he was scarcely capable of attending to them. All his faculties seemed absorbed by the miracle that permitted a lily like this to bloom in such ugliness and disorder, a star like this to shine through such murkiness! But while his mind swam with the amazement of it, the doctor had gone from the room and closed the door behind him, drawing his granddaughter along with him.

For an instant, Mark had some foolish thought of following them. There was a tumult, a conflict, within him. Those intuitions and suspicions that had dragged him thither were all aroused and clamorous. This was a place that demanded investigation; this a man whose title was a cover for dark deeds, nefarious practices. And there was the girl, so pure, so lovely—a saint from some old Italian fresco, grave and good and childlike, and, oh, so adorable! A rush of such strong emotion as he had never before known—of the instinct for capture, for fight—swept over



him. He wanted to snatch her away out of the sordidness and mystery that enveloped her, into the daylight, into wide, fragrant airs.

But when he had advanced as far as the threshold of the office and stood fronting the empty stairway up which she had vanished with her grandfather, and sniffing the faint, acrid odor of the heavy air, he realized that such a medieval performance would be difficult. He was here, after all, in pursuit of information, not of romance. It was, he assured himself, the detective rather than the lover in him that had brought him back. He must not let sentiment and excitement unfit him for his task. He went back into the office and closed the door. How lovely she was! How like some sweet child from the German fairy tales of his boyhood! That was what it all was—a fairy story; she was the lovely princess strangely imprisoned in the grim old ogre's castle—a castle concealing, Mark was now assured, relics as ghastly as the picked bones of victims that used to adorn the giants' strongholds.

The telephone bell rang sharply. The instrument stood along with many other things on the desk. As no one appeared to answer it and as it continued to ring, Mark took upon himself the task.

"Hello!" growled a voice at the other end of the wire. "Why don't you be all day?" Then, as an afterthought: "Doctor Artgeld?"

"Yes," answered Mark. He reached for a pencil to make a memorandum of the call for the physician. His voice was a trifle hoarse from the excitement of his emotions. "Who is this?"

"Waldstein," was the answer. "Say, doc, how much of that new invoice are you going to take? I want to know, for I've got an order in Cleveland to fill —" Then some suspicion must have vibrated along the wire, for the voice broke off abruptly. It resumed after

a half second's pause: "This is Doctor Artgeld, is it?"

"His office," replied Mark. "I'll take the message. He's engaged with a patient."

The only reply was the unmistakable click of a receiver replaced upon its hook. The wires hummed only with waves of electricity; there was no more articulate speech along them. Mark, realizing that Waldstein had abruptly terminated the conversation, jiggled his receiver hook.

"Central," he said, "I've been cut off. Reconnect me, will you?"

"What number you calling?" drawled central.

"I wasn't calling any number. I've been cut off in the middle of a conversation. Please get me the number that was calling me."

But even as he issued the terse command, Mark knew that he would not so easily gain the information that he wanted. He heard the tread of Doctor Artgeld's heavy feet down the stairs. He continued to hold the instrument to his ear in the forlorn hope that before the door opened he might have in his possession something that he felt sure would, once known, be a valuable clew. But in vain. As the doctor reentered his office, the telephone operator was making her monotonous promise: "If I can locate the party, I'll call you."

The old man's bushy eyebrows came sharply together at sight of Mark at the telephone. But his new patient explained the circumstance with a pleasant, casual air.

"Somebody called you up, Doctor Artgeld," he said. "I was going to try to make a memorandum of the call for you, but central interfered. She cut us off. I got the name, though. It was Waldstein."

"Waldstein? Waldstein?" The doctor appeared to ruminate. "I don't remember any Waldstein. Yes, yes, I do, too. Hugo Waldstein." He thumbed

the old memorandum book. "Did he say what he wanted?"

"No; we were cut off at once. He said something, but I couldn't understand him, and before I could ask him to repeat it, we were disconnected. But doubtless you can locate him, since you know who it is. How was the patient upstairs?"

"All right," answered Doctor Artgeld shortly. "Just one of these women's panics. Now, to go back to your case —" And he continued the compounding of a prescription for Mark.

Mark paid his bill, took his crudely powdered blend of drugs, received instruction as to when to return, and went out of the house scarcely wiser than he had gone into it. Yet he did not feel that the time had been wasted. There was one Waldstein to be found; and he had caught a glimpse of Greta.

It was in hope of catching another glimpse of her that he lingered on the street much of the afternoon. She did not come out to illumine the drab sidewalks. But by and by a brisk-looking man, somewhat official in his appearance, ran up the steps, rang the bell, and was admitted. In fifteen or twenty minutes he was out again. And in another fifteen or twenty an undertaker's wagon drew up before the house.

Mark watched it with a frozen feeling of terror. He stood rooted to the sidewalk opposite, careless of being seen and recognized, until two men carried out something covered over with a blanket, and laid it in the wagon. The door was opened wide enough for him to see a little way into the dim hall. He caught the glimmer of Greta's pink dress and experienced a relief so intense that it left him weak and shaken. Of course, of course, he had known for what that grim vehicle had come—that poor soul to whom the doctor had been so hurriedly called; and yet until he had seen, with his own eyes, the young girl,

alive, breathing, and sweet, he could not have left the place.

The next morning he read an obscure paragraph in the paper to the effect that a woman known as "Helen le Grand" had died suddenly in the consulting room of an East Side doctor, Gustavus Artgeld. A representative of the coroner's office had viewed the body and ascribed the death to natural causes, and it had been removed to an undertaking establishment.

It became more important than ever for Mark that Greta should be removed from such surroundings. But how?

### III.

Mark, obsessed by the notion of Doctor Artgeld's connection with the smuggling of opium, haunted by the name of Waldstein, preyed upon by fears for Greta, was not in condition to perform his daily duties with his customary alertness and vigor. His suspicions of the good old East Side doctor failed to move his superior officers to action. He was, indeed, advised to take a few days off and to recover his mental tone by shooting rabbits for a Thanksgiving pie—a suggestion that he indignantly spurned.

"See here, my boy," said his kindly superior. "A man carrying a packet of smuggled opium has a fit and dies in front of an obscure physician's dwelling. You must see that there is nothing on earth to connect the physician with the smuggler. The long arm of coincidence might possibly stretch itself so that the smuggling seaman should die before the very house to which he was bound; but it is exceedingly unlikely, and there is not a particle of proof to that effect.

"Well, and you think the old fellow is a charlatan—very likely he is. But he may be the worst old quack in existence and that does not give the customs department the slightest warrant for in-



*Then she caught sight of Mark and broke off, a rosy light of recognition overspreading the pallor of her face.*

vading his house. It's up to the county medical society to look after his sort, and you might, as a conscientious citizen, lay your observations before it. And because a gentleman named Waldstein doesn't care to talk to you over the telephone doesn't mean a single thing of interest to this office. Waldstein may show bad taste in not wanting to talk to you——"

"Oh, the dickens!" said Mark, breaking into a laugh in spite of his obstinate instinct that his superior was mistaken.

"You take Friday and Saturday off and go shoot rabbits or quail or something," concluded the older man.

But Mark declined the proffered holiday. Instead, he employed his spare time in a study of the telephone books of New York and its constituent boroughs. There were many Waldsteins, though none was Hugo, and none of them could be associated in any fashion with Doctor Artgeld. He even went so far as to call some of them up from different pay stations and to say to them: "You left a message for Doctor Artgeld to call you up?" But all he accomplished by this wily performance was to learn in how wide a range of boredom and exasperation the human voice could say: "You've got the wrong number. Ring off."

And then, one day, not long before Christmas, as he took his part in the examination of goods shipped in on one of the French liners, he saw a crate labeled: "Schlemmacher & Waldstein, Wholesale Drugs, — Avenue, New York, N. Y., U. S. A." The consigners were a firm of French instrument makers; an active young clerk of Schlemmacher & Waldstein's was on the dock with his invoice and his orders. With him Mark achieved a few words, although he was not personally engaged in the examination of the box. He extracted the information that, though the firm name was "Schlem-

macher & Waldstein," the only part that any Schlemmacher played in its business was to collect income from it.

"Old Schlemmacher died six years ago, and all his grown children are daughters," said the young man. "There is a little fellow, six years old—maybe he'll come into the concern when he's old enough. But he'll probably do just as well if he leaves the whole business to Waldstein. There's a money-maker for you! This Waldstein got into the firm just before old Schlemmacher died—a son of one of the original partners, he is. Some business man, he!"

"Waldstein—Waldstein?" said Mark, as if ruminating as to a possible acquaintance. "Where does he live?"

"Out at Greenwich," replied the clerk, stuffing his papers into his pocket and signaling his porter.

Mark had not tried the Waldsteins of Greenwich on the telephone. And, of course, he had not looked for the Waldstein of New York under the letter "S." But—a wholesale drug firm? And a fresh invoice of what? And the stale, acrid odor of Doctor Artgeld's halls? He went back to the office full of fresh enthusiasm. Would the department at least authorize an examination into the books of Schlemmacher & Waldstein? This time there was a trifle more of consideration paid to the young man's earnestness and insistence. Yet Schlemmacher & Waldstein was a long-established and highly respectable concern; on what grounds should the demand be made?

"It is evident that Waldstein—if he is the man who called up Doctor Artgeld that day, and I have a hunch that he is——" answered Mark eagerly, "uses the telephone in his business. Suppose we call him up in the person of Doctor Artgeld, ask for a supply of the raw opium—and see what happens! It will be easy enough to have the connection cut off at the crucial moment."

"It might be managed," said the chief

thoughtfully. "But I think it would be a good idea to have the court order for the surrender of their books for examination signed and ready to serve before we begin operations. Your hunch, as you call it, is beginning to impress me, too, Cotrelly. And there's no particular use in giving the fellow a chance to get any of his records hidden or doctored while we wait for an order, after we have aroused his suspicions."

The plan was laid accordingly. The order for the surrender of the books for examination was obtained from the Federal court of the district, and officers were sent to await, at a place adjacent to Schlemmacher & Waldstein's, a telephone message from headquarters. This would allow of almost no interval between the possible confirming of the suspicions as to traffic between the old East Side doctor and the wholesale druggist, and the demand for the latter's books.

"It would be strange if——" said the surveyor and broke off, looking at Mark. "Of course you realize," he resumed, "that we have nothing to do with the case, even if it is proved that Schlemmacher & Waldstein are selling opium for illegal purposes? It's only with smuggled opium that we deal—you realize that?"

"Oh, yes, I realize that," replied Mark. "But I—I am interested in the case. And if we can prove that Doctor Artgeld is buying opium for illegal purposes, it will go a long way toward proving that that poor Swede was smuggling it in for him. But, anyway, I have a personal interest in this matter." In his imagination the sweet, grave face of Greta shone like an altar picture set round with candles.

Waldstein, duly reached by telephone the next day when all was in readiness for the demand upon him, replied unsuspiciously enough to the announcement that Doctor Artgeld was at the other end of the wire.

"Vell, doc," he answered genially, "vat can I do for you to-day?"

A Germanic voice replied that he could send him a certain rather large amount of raw opium. There was a minute of tense silence at the other end of the wire. Then the voice of Waldstein said sharply, suspiciously, bewilderedly: "Vat the devil do you need all that for so soon? It was only two days ago since you had as much before. Hello, hello!"

He was suddenly, but too late, on guard. The receiver in the customs office was hung up. When it was removed again, the officers who were playing pool in a pool room across the street from Schlemmacher & Waldstein were the recipients of a message. So swiftly did they move that when they were admitted to Mr. Waldstein's private office by an alarmed clerk, cowed by their badges into instant compliance with their request, Mr. Waldstein was in excited conversation with the true Doctor Artgeld, and was crying angrily:

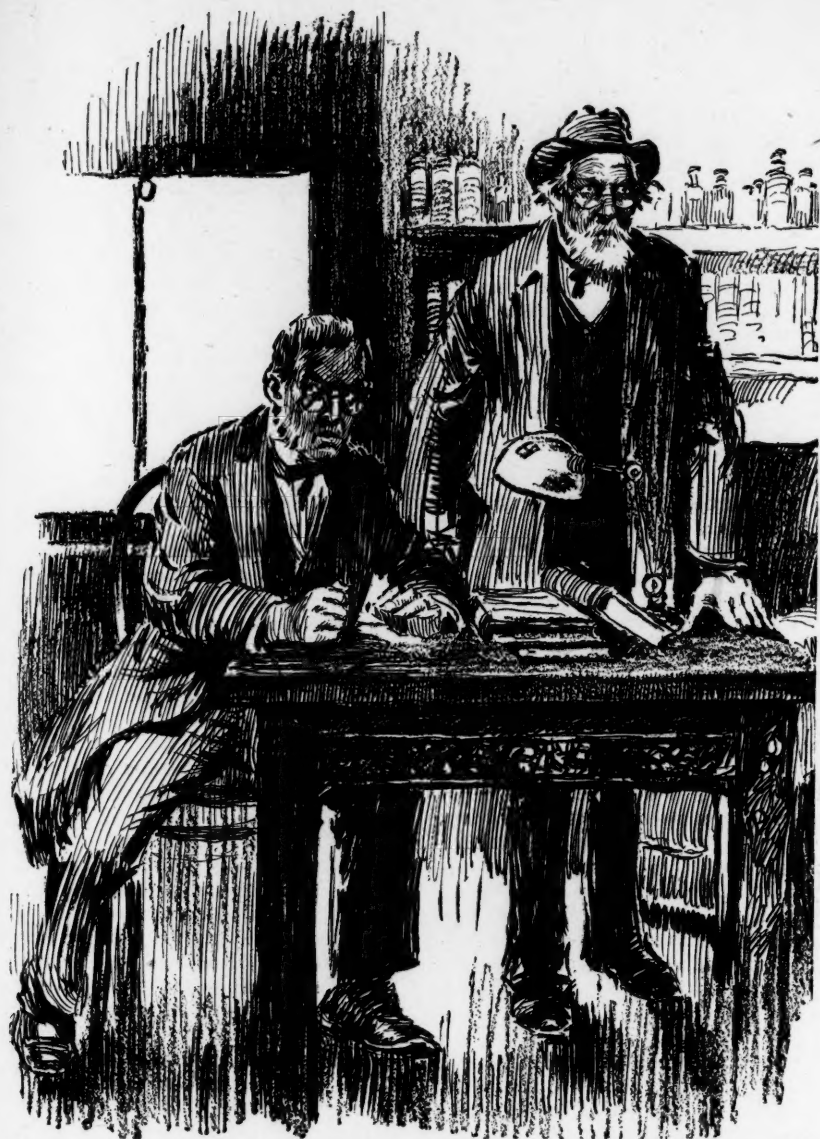
"Of course, I didn't mistake the name. It's a trap; that is vat it is!"

And upon him, even as those words hung poised for a second in the air, was served the demand for the surrender of his books.

It was a snowy December afternoon when the descent upon Doctor Artgeld's office was made. The books of Schlemmacher & Waldstein had amply corroborated Mark's suspicions; the amount of raw opium that the wholesale firm sold to the old German in the dingy East Side house was too great for any legal purpose. Nor was he the only physician in town whom the wholesalers had supplied with the drug in quantities plainly criminal.

Waldstein and his counsel, of course, had declared his lack of responsibility for the use made of the stuff that he sold; he sold, as he pointed out to the authorities, only to properly accredited







the air, was served the demand for the surrender of his books.

persons—physicians, retail druggists throughout the country, and the like. It was not for him, he proclaimed, to keep a watchful, ethical eye upon the amounts purchased by each customer, and to limit the purchaser's supply to what he, the wholesaler, considered right!

Mark, who accompanied the party descending upon the office of Greta's grandfather, had a heavy heart that afternoon. It was made heavier by the festal preparations already abroad in the streets—the red-and-green paper festoons with which shop windows were garlanded, the trees of fir, the wreaths of holly and ground pine that lay in heaped, aromatic masses outside the grocers' doors, the air of bustle and good nature that pervaded the streets. It was a sorry time to choose for coming upon such an errand.

He hoped to find that his friend, Huldah Mortimer, the pretty little widow whom his aunt had vainly hoped he would lead out of her weeds, would be somewhere along the street, prepared to help him, if need were, with Greta. He had told Mrs. Mortimer the story of the girl from the German fairy story, and she had responded to it with a warmth and a sweetness that had touched his heart. And now, as the little party of which he was one paused at Doctor Artgeld's door, he saw Huldah's limousine waiting across the street, and the pretty, bright-eyed woman, wrapped in furs, within it. Mark ran over to greet and thank her. Then he rejoined his party.

They demanded admission from the old woman whom Mark remembered from his past visit. She eyed them beligerently, and was for leaving them upon the threshold while she went to consult the doctor; but a stiff boot prevented her, and the party filed into the squalid hall. At the back of it, Mark saw Greta. He hurried toward her.

"Miss Artgeld," he cried, his heart

pounding against his ribs, his eyes too blurred by pity and excitement to note the blush with which she greeted him, "I am afraid we have come on an errand painful to you. Your grandfather is suspected of—conducting an illegal business here. If he is—arrested—will you be alone, except for that old woman who opens the door?"

The color had faded from her face, but she looked at him with eyes that were steady in spite of their fear.

"There is no one else here," she said in answer to his question. "But——"

"Wait for just a minute, will you, before you ask any questions? I feared you were alone. You have few friends in the city, is it not so?"

"Only grandfather and Ulrica," she answered. "I came to this country only eight months ago."

"It is as I feared it might be. Now—if—if—there is trouble for your grandfather, and if he is—taken away—will you allow a lady who is waiting outside, who is a friend of mine, to be a friend of yours also? Will you go with her to her home until your own affairs are straightened out? I am Mark Cotrelly, of the customs bureau. She is Mrs. Mortimer, and you may ask any one at my office about me, and any one you wish to find out about her. But——"

"I do not need to ask about you," the girl replied gravely, "or a lady who is your friend. There is something in me"—she touched her breast lightly with her hand—"that tells me who is to trust and who is not. I—it told me something of grandfather and of Ulrica, though I did not know what. And it tells me I may trust you."

Mark bent his head and kissed her hand. Then he followed the other men into Doctor Artgeld's office.

He followed them, in a few minutes, up the stairs to the dingily gaudy rooms where Doctor Artgeld's patients smoked opium. He watched the confiscation of the outfits. He watched the seizure of

the books, showing how the old man had conducted a business not only with the wholesale druggist, but with seamen from the southern ports, who smuggled the Chinese product in to him; books showing how he conducted also a thriving business with certain Chinese opium joints which, having difficulty in obtaining their goods through their usual channels on account of the activity of the Federal departments engaged in stamping out the opium traffic, had found the good old doctor a safe channel.

He followed them into the old man's presence and caught the dull, cold look of hatred that he bent upon him. But he was uplifted by the recollection of the pure shining of Greta's grave, innocently wise eyes.

The good old doctor wasted few words in recriminations or in denials. He was, after all, a man of intelligence, and denial was useless in view of those two upper rooms. The one thing about which he permitted himself to express anxiety was his granddaughter. Mark told him what he had done, who he was, who was the lady to whose care he de-

sired to confide Greta, and what persons could vouch for them both.

"You!" cried the old man with a volcanic burst of anger. But he controlled it. "Why?" he asked.

"Because, I suppose, I am in love with her," Mark somewhat surprised himself by saying. "But I promise you one thing—not until your affairs are settled, and you have had a chance to tell her what you wish about me, will I say a single word of love to her. I promise it."

The old man swore in German for a second. Then, with grim philosophy, he called up on the telephone the persons to whom Mark had referred him as to his trustworthiness and Mrs. Mortimer's.

"It is well," he concluded. "I could wish my granddaughter's friend were not my enemy. But it is well that she has a friend."

And it was thus that Mark's hunch, which had hitherto sometimes led him to a certain renown and a certain reward in his chosen pursuit, led him now to love and his heart's desire.

### A Miracle in the Park

SOMETHING wonderful to-day  
 Makes more rich a world of spring  
 Grown accustomed to the sway  
 Of the first white, powdery wing  
 In and out the leaves among,  
 And the thrush note clear and high,  
 Even tulips freshly sprung  
 Stood familiar to the eye.

But, where basins panted bare  
 Only yesterday—where reigned  
 Sculptured Neptune, sulking there  
 'Mid his thirsty mermen, drained,  
 Suddenly is wealth of wet,  
 Diamond shower and wind-blown spray;  
 Neptune in his pool deep-set  
 Weeps for joy. *The fountains play!*

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

# THE "ESS ESS ERS"

by  
**Holman**  
**F.**  
**Day**



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

THE June sunlight shed its benison over all the scene. The warm rays bathed the fresh boards of the new grand stand and coaxed forth little beads of balmy pitch, which perfumed the air. The grand stand creaked under the burden it bore; men, women, and children were there—Scotaze had turned out its best in their bravest attire. No more festal array of terraced humanity had ever been set forth to view in the old town.

Six gentlemen occupied the center box at the foot of the tier of seats. Their garb proclaimed their calling—frock coats and white neckties.

At exactly two o'clock that afternoon, one of these gentlemen, whose face was nicely framed between the neatest "sideboards" that razor ever trained, rose and faced the multitude.

"Brothers and sisters," he declared, "I am proud that I have been selected to speak the prologue to-day of this local era of peace on earth and good will to men. Of various creeds and sects though we may be, we are gathered here this day under the unifying ægis of our national game. I confess that I do not know much about baseball as a sport, never having witnessed a game,

but I am sure that, as it will be conducted here in our dear Scotaze, it will be elevated to a plane of sportsmanship never before witnessed in America. It was a grand idea—this organizing of baseball teams in our various Sunday schools, and we are here assembled to bid it hearty Godspeed. I will now give way to the gentleman who does know all about the game, and whose happy thought it was to organize this truly panecclesiastical movement."

The parson had received subdued and merely perfunctory applause when he rose, but the gentleman whom he introduced got three cheers and a tiger. He was a rotund young man, who wore a gray derby hat cocked on one side of his head and carried a yellow cane that matched his gloves. He stood upon a chair that was placed in the lower aisle and carefully adjusted his puffed neck scarf and the folds of his pearl-gray suit before he began to talk.

"Thank you kindly, one and all, ladies and gents," he said, ducking a bow. "Of course, you understand I ain't no speechmaker, and can't pass you no line of talk like the elder just done it. But I want to say to you that when I



come into this town a little while ago, and opened up the only metropolitan tonsorial parlors you ever had here, I got to talking to customers, and see'd right off what this town needed. You wa'n't getting together on nothing where you could whoop it up and have a good time seeing good, clean sport.

"I got the tip that your churches was pull-hauling and making faces at each other." Some of the white-tied gentlemen in the pastors' box winced. "I ain't casting no slurs on nobody. But you know there's nothing like getting into the sport end of things in this big country of ours—getting into the spirit of the big game so as to forget all little petty differences. When you get to know more about sport, and watch this series of games a little while, then you'll understand better what I mean. All is, I piked around to the Sunday-school superintendents and says I, 'Gents, what you want to do is to get the bile out of you, and set the boys doing something in the sport line. A good, healthy Christian is the best kind of a Christian,' I says.

"I just went right ahead and poked 'em up good and plenty. And what's the result? Why, to-day we're ready to play the first game of the series in the Scotaze Sunday-school League, and I call for three cheers for the hottest little league in the country."

He whipsawed the yellow cane, and the cheers were promptly forthcoming.

"That's the spirit, ladies and gents! That shows you all know a good thing when it's put up to you. You're going to see games that will make a deacon forget last Sunday's text. All gate money to be divided among the churches, and the winning team will get a pennant and a new piano for the vestry. Me and the Sunday-school superintendents have worked it all out so carefully that old Nebbykidnazzar himself couldn't stick his finger into a hole in the schedule or the plan of di-

vision of gate receipts. I ain't here to brag about myself, but I want to say that I know the game from bat bag up. You ain't made no mistake in following me, and letting me promote new Christian spirit among your churches.

"To-day we trot onto the field before your admiring gaze the 'Matties' and the 'Web-foots.' Two days later the 'Go-uppers' will tackle the 'Quakers.' Then the 'Sallies' will go after the scalps of the 'Congoes.' That will give you a chance to see how each nine works out. Then go ahead and place your bets and root!"

One of the occupants of the pastors' box leaned over the rail and interrupted the enthusiastic master of ceremonies.

"We are a little shocked by your style of nomenclature, Brother Wyer," he protested.

"You're which by what?"

"Those names seem undignified."

"What ye mean? You want these teams called Methodists and Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists and Friends and Universalists and Congregationalists?"

"That would be much more seemly."

"Yes, and it would seem more muchly," blurted the promoter, with little patience for such quibbling. "We ain't no time in baseball for long words. There wouldn't be the sociable feeling about baseball there is if it wasn't for the nicknames. Look how the big leagues do it! They know their card! Tigers, Cubs, Red Sox, and so forth. Play ball—play ball, elders! Get into the game. If we call the Methodist nine the 'Matties,' it ain't knocking religion—it's getting into the spirit of real sport. Ain't I right, ladies and gents?"

He was loudly indorsed by the "gents," even if the ladies' voices were not very strong.

"Again thanking you kindly, one and all," concluded Mr. Wyer, advertised on his windows as "tonsorial

artist and up-to-date hairdresser, latest Broadway ideas," "I will now ask you to set tight, unlimber your voices, prop open your eyes, and get busy with some real Christian sport."

He ripped a glossy white ball out of its pasteboard carton and handed the sphere to the gentleman who had spoken the prologue—Pastor Treworgy, of the Methodist parish. The reverend gentleman tossed the ball out upon the field, and the game began.

When the game concluded, amid great uproar and enthusiasm, the Matties were victors—downing the Webfoots by the narrow margin of one score.

The Methodist rooters rushed out upon the field—men, women, and children—and lavished compliments and endearments upon their youthful gladiators. Then they formed a procession, led by the pastor, and marched away singing, "We Shall Come Rejoicing, Bringing in the Sheaves."

It was easy to distinguish the Baptist group in the departing throng. There were somber faces, and some of the men even scowled.

"It's the meek that shall inherit, and pride goeth before a fall," sniffed a woman in the Baptist ranks.

Hiram Look, old showman, was marching with his wife in the Baptist throng. When he caught sight of Cap'n Aaron Sproul trudging along on the outskirts of the crowd, he left his wife and the band of the defeated, and went across and caught step with his friend.

"Well, go ahead and say it," advised Hiram.

"Say what?" inquired Cap'n Sproul.

"Flap your wings and crow. Hout the Baptists. Hum over a bar of 'Bringing in the Sheaves.' But I can tell you that just because you've got one fluke game at the start-off ain't no sign you're going to bring in any more sheaves. Do your singing right now.

We're going to do a little sheaving ourselves after this. If that shortstop hadn't had goose eggs for eyes and soft soap on his hands, he would——"

"What the cussnation is the matter with you, anyway?" demanded the cap'n.

"Give the Methodist war whoop."

"What for."

"Your nine got the game, didn't it?"

"My nine! What are you trying to plaster any of this fool business onto me for?"

"Your wife goes to the Methodist church, and you have set with her to-day on the grand stand, haven't you? You're rooting for 'em, ain't you? I'll bet you anything, from ten up to five hundred, that your nine can't——"

"See here," blazed the cap'n, "you quit that! I set 'side of my wife to-day because she wanted a little outing, and that's where a husband ought to set. But as for any interest in that fool game, or caring who beat, or thinking about it now, or ever wanting to see another game—why, I'd just as soon watch a bunch of grasshoppers play leapfrog. If you're going to walk with me, talk about something sensible."

"You mean to say you set there all the afternoon amongst them howling Methodists, and didn't turn a hair?"

"What was there to be excited about? Only a lot of boys knocking a ball sky-high!"

"But as a Methodist——"

"I ain't one—no more'n you're a Baptist."

"I am a Baptist," announced Hiram.

"Look here, you never darkened the doors of that church, and you know it."

"Well, my wife goes there. I don't blame you, Sproul, for being ashamed to own up that you're hitched in with the Methodist bunch. There they go—howling off just as if they had won that game honestly, instead of having it

handed to 'em by that umpire. If I hadn't been a law-abiding Baptist, sitting there to-day amongst real ladies and gents, I'd have shown 'em what a real holler means. But I warn you and your bunch that you can't put it over on us again."

The cap'n trudged on without reply.

"You better tell 'em so," advised Hiram truculently.

"You would have enjoyed yourself fine if you had lived in them times when they was having all the fun that is described in Fox's 'Book of Martyrs,'" stated Cap'n Sproul, thus provoked. "Having that kind of a disposition, you would have been ready to grab into any church row that was going on in your neighborhood.

I can shut my eyes and see you pulling out a feller's toenails with a pair of pincers because he disagreed with you as to whether another feller tagged goal at the home plate, or whatever they call it, and so lost a point for the religious sect he belonged to. Now, Hiram, you sheer off. You can't get me into this argument, nohow. I don't care who licks. If the rest of 'em feel anyways like you do—that dude barber has started a nice thing in this town."

Showman Look was plainly inclined to continue this verbal warfare, but the



"There is no citizen of prominence who can shirk his obligations to his fellow men," protested the Reverend Treworgy.

cap'n halted and vibrated a warning finger.

"You can't drag me into this thing, Hiram, not if you hitch a yoke of oxen on. If you like baseball, go ahead. Eat a baseball for breakfast every morning—fried, pickled, or with gravy on it. After this, I'm going to stay to home and work in my garden."

Into that garden a few days later came the Reverend Mr. Treworgy, the pastor of the Methodist church, accompanied by Mr. Treadwell, the superintendent of the Methodist Sunday

school. The cap'n gave over thinning his beets and stared at them with no especial cordiality. He scented something relating to baseball in this visit.

"Brother Treadwell will explain, being better versed in the intricacies of the situation," stated the pastor.

"Of course, being an interested party—affiliated as you are with our church and——"

"I ain't interested, and I ain't affiliated," broke in the cap'n, knocking dirt off the beet greens. "My wife tends out on the Methodies, and I allow her to mind her own business in religion. That's all."

"But we must consider you as one of our own," insisted the superintendent. "You graced the first game of the Ess Ess League with your distinguished presence. If you are not thoroughly posted, I will inform you that no players are eligible unless they are members of a Sunday school. Great interest has been stimulated in Sunday-school work. We have never had such attendance. Every boy in town now attends regularly and is very faithful in classes. And if I do say it, the Methodist society has been diligent and wide awake from the very start, and has the best material in the league."

"If you're here after a donation to buy catechisms or baseballs, say how much and let me get back to these beets," snapped the cap'n. "I don't know which you're using most of just now, and you seem to be pretty well mixed up yourselves—but, never mind. Name your sum."

"We are not after money, dear Captain Sproul. Our gate receipts are yielding us perfectly wonderful amounts. We are here in the interests of fair play. You are a leading and influential man, and we call on you—considering you as a member of our parish—to use your influence with another leading citizen, who has associated himself with the Baptist parish.

I refer to Mr. Hiram Look. He has thrown himself into our Ess Ess League in most violent fashion."

"Likely enough. He'd throw himself into a thrashing machine if he really thought public opinion wanted him to stay out of it. You ain't telling me any news."

"But the league was organized to promote clean sport and create a spirit of unity between our churches, and to entertain the public and earn some money for church needs. Of course, we have to put up with considerable from Mr. Wyer in the way of speech and actions—but it must be confessed that he is energetic and faithful. We respect him as the one who suggested the idea."

"Lo, from such as these great things arise," put in the pastor.

"But Mr. Look," went on the superintendent, "has begun to inject a very vicious element into this noble undertaking. He has secretly bought up two of our best players—that is, we are quite positive that money has passed. At any rate, our catcher and first baseman have changed their church allegiance and have gone over to the Baptists. We lost the last game."

"Well, what have I got to do with all that?" inquired the cap'n. "Expect me to join a Sunday-school class and play ball?"

"No one else in town can control Mr. Look as you can. We want you to go to him and make him see the error of his ways."

The cap'n arose and dusted the knees of his trousers.

"Gents, Hime Look tried to *drag* me into this thing—and now you come around and try to *push* me in. Not by a blame sight! What's the matter with this blasted town, anyway? I came off the sea and settled inland so as to have some peace and quietness in my last days. And it has got so that even ministers and Sunday-school su-

perintendents come around and stick brads into me."

"There is no citizen of prominence who can shirk his obligations to his fellow men," protested the Reverend Treworgy.

"You can call this stand o' mine what you want to. I ain't going to get mixed into it."

"Then you will idly stand by and see youth corrupted and injustice prevail, will you?" inquired the pastor, with much severity.

"Probably will, if you expect me to go and stick my fingers into that baseball shaddygodabus of yours," retorted the cap'n, in serene tones. "And now I wish you a pleasant good day, and you will kindly step high and not knock your feet against my garden sassa as you pass out."

They departed, but such cavalier treatment of a parson and a Sunday-school superintendent stirred resentment in the Methodist parish as soon as it was circulated—and the two who had suffered rebuff at the run-in with Cap'n Sproul were promptly assiduous in the matter of wide circulation. The cap'n found his meek wife gazing at him that evening with unaccustomed reproach in her eyes.

"Trying to break up families with their infernal old baseball bat now, be they?" he observed, after he had made her tell him what such looks meant.

"But you shouldn't have talked up like that to our minister," she said.

"He had no business chasing a barber into baseball and trying to keep pace with Hime Look in circus shenanigan. When a parson goes and jumps into a hog wallow with both eyes open, he needn't think I'm going to jump in and splash around with him to keep him company."

"But it would be such elevating sport if only Hiram Look could be kept out of it," pleaded his wife. "He is the only disturbing element."

"He is, hey? I was in Boadway's store yesterday, and Moses Frye told Deacon Snell that it was mighty lucky the Frye family had always been meek and peaceful Quakers, opposed to all warfare, for if that wasn't so, he would cuff Deacon Snell's ears up to a pick and then knock the pick off. And Snell dasted him to come on, and twitted him about how Quakers always hid behind their religion because they was afraid to fight. It was all about this baseball. And now you want to get me into it, hey? Louada Murilla, it looks to me as if baseball is getting to be as bad for you as it is for the rest of this town. You'd better stay home and tend to your tatting."

"But it's only right to have an interest in what our church does—and we need that piano in the vestry. I'm no hand for quarrels, Aaron, and you know it, but if there's anything I can do to put Hiram Look and that Baptist bunch on their backs, I'm going to do it—and all the rest of the Methodist ladies feel the same way. So there!"

Cap'n Sproul stared at the usually placid and mild wife of his heart as he would have stared at a domestic pullet who had suddenly flapped her wings and begun to peck a wild cat on the nose.

"It's a grand game—it's the true American sport—and it has got to be protected against men like Hiram Look," added his wife, with vigor.

"I've never given off orders to you before, Louada Murilla, but I tell you now to keep away from them baseball games."

"And I've always done just what you wanted me to do, Aaron. But with our Methodist team standing second and only one game needed to tie the Baptists and something liable to happen that Hiram Look and none of the rest of his gang have reckoned on, it isn't in human nature to stay away.





640 Cap'n Sproul lowered his head and wagged it menacingly. "From this time on, Mr. Look, I want



you to understand that I'm about the liveliest Methody that ever watched the collection platter passed." 641

Our Ladies' Auxiliary Society have signed a pledge to tend out on every game—and I'm not going to break that pledge and be disgraced in my church."

Now the cap'n felt as if his meek biddy had pecked *his* nose, after having routed the wild cat.

"I have read pieces in the papers how folks get all wowed up over that game," he muttered, "and seen 'em pack around bulletin boards and howl when I've been up to the city, but I never thought I'd have it brought right home to me."

He looked at his wife with increasing wonderment.

"Hiram Look isn't the only man in this town who has nerve," she went on, her eyes glistening. "He sneaked two of our men away from us—but it was very coarse work." The cap'n snapped his eyes in bewilderment. Where had his patient, country wife ever picked up such language? "He bought them. But we have got the three best men from the Seventh Day Adventists, and when the show-down comes, there won't be any come-back, Aaron. They were boys who had been going to the Advent Church, and didn't know what the creed of that society meant. The minute we explained the Methodist creed to them, they came right over into our Sunday school. And we're going to put them into the game against the Baptists to-morrow. We'll show Hiram Look something before the day is over!"

"I never heard of such goings-on," protested Cap'n Sproul. "Have you and all the rest of this town gone crazy, Louada Murilla? Creed or no creed—it ain't right to coax boys away from the Advent Sunday school because they can play ball better."

"Oh, the Advents are almost tail-enders in the league," stated his wife. "They stand no show, and we may just as well have their best men in our team as not. In the end it's going

to settle down into a fight between the Methodists and the Baptists, anyway. The Congoes got all stirred up on account of the way they were used in that last game with the Baptists, and—now this must be very, very secret between us, Aaron—when it comes to the last pinch, I'm pretty sure the Congoes will throw us a few games, and the Quakers——"

"Hold right on!" shouted her husband. "Where in the devil did you pick up all that sculch in the way of talk, and them notions in the way of treating your neighbors?"

"Why, it's all the ladies talk about nowadays. Baseball is a clean, elevating sport, and America is proud of it, and——"

"Vast heaving—'vast heaving on that! Sounds like you learned it out of a book. It ain't what you *say* about that game—it's what you're *doing*. Old Cap'n Teach, the Barb'ry pirate, never planned worse capers than you're starting out on in this town!"

"I say baseball is a good, honest sport, Aaron, but that isn't any reason why we're going to sit back and smile and simper and twiddle our fingers and let Hiram Look carry off that piano and all the glory for the Baptists and then laugh at us for being so soft. Even the Bible advises an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and says to be as wise as the serpent. We propose to keep our end up, and if you were only up and coming you'd pitch in and help us. Our minister wouldn't ask you to do anything wrong—and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for snapping him off to-day."

Cap'n Sproul opened his mouth—but he couldn't find words, and he gasped once or twice and then closed it. Then he went to bed. It was plain to him that he was poorly equipped to discuss the local baseball situation with the clergy or his wife.

From then on, he confined himself

doggedly to the little confines of his garden, and strove to shut eyes and ears to the stew and clamor and turmoil which were fostered by the activities of the Ess Ess League. But though he might shun outsiders, he could not keep his own wife away from him, and, therefore, his home was invaded by the trouble that was convulsing Scotaze.

One day he grabbed his hat, flung himself out of the house, and marched over to Hiram Look's place.

He found that eminent disturber sitting under a tree in his front yard in deep conference with a husky young man whom the cap'n had never laid eyes on before.

"Shake hands with my neph'y," invited Hiram.

"Never knew you had one."

"You ain't doubting my word and what you can see for yourself, are you?"

The cap'n wagged the huge hand of the stranger. But he did not show cordiality as he studied the young man.

"He has come to live with me and is going to join our Baptist Sunday school, and, seeing as how he likes outdoor sports very much, he is trying to learn how to play baseball. Maybe he'll catch on so as to play a little before the league season here is over."

Hiram's eyes avoided the cap'n's wrathful stare.

"I want to see you private and alone," declared the old mariner.

"I hain't got no privacy from my neph'y," stated Hiram, plainly not relishing the idea of a private conference, for the cap'n's mood did not seem attractive.

"If you haven't got any shame, then I haven't got any bashfulness," growled Cap'n Sproul. "Hiram, by your sticking yourself into this baseball business in this town the way you've done, you're making my life a hell on earth for me—and I ain't ever done anything to you to deserve it. I'm houted by my

wife and sneered at by the whole Methodist church. It's all on account of you. I'm over here to beg and implore you as a friend to let 'em run their games by themselves, all nice and pious."

"Pious nothing! Day before yesterday six business men in the Universalist church chipped into a secret fund and stole three of my Baptist players. I'm only holding up my church end. And I've imported a fellow here that they can't buy."

"I tell you this thing is bad enough for me as it is—having 'em belt me around for what you're doing," pleaded the cap'n. "They'll drive me crazy if you try to plug in this ringer."

"Ringer! The rules admit any member of a Scotaze family as a player, and my neph'y—"

"He ain't your neph'y."

"Prove it."

"Hiram, I ain't your keeper, but they insist on making me so in this town, seeing how close we've been to each other. Let 'em play their games as they see fit—it ain't your business or mine. Let's help each other to live in peace. It's no output to you to quit—and it means comfort to me."

"A nice job the Methodist church is putting up on me, and a nice thing you're making of yourself to be their cat's-paw!" sneered Hiram. "I see the whole plot. That first game gave you your chance to crow over me, and now you want to tole me off'm the trail so that you and your Methodist crowd can give me the laugh when you lug that piano off. I didn't think you would descend so low, Aaron."

"I'm holding my temper now, all patient and humble, just like I do at home, because I feel that you and all the rest of the people in this town, including my own wife, have become plumb, raving lunatics all of a sudden, and have got to be nussed back again. If I didn't think you was crazy, Hiram Look, and



*The cap'n sat on an overturned wheelbarrow and critically inspected the work of his adopted son.*

you said such a thing to me in your sober senses, I'd——"

"Make no threats you ain't prepared to back up," advised Hiram truculently. "My nephew is right here to witness anything you may do or say."

"Don't propose to pay no attention to me as a friend, hey?"

"You ain't no friend of mine, to come here and try to hornswoggle me so that your Methodies can win the championship."

"I ain't a Methodist. Don't you twit me any more that way."

"I say you are. You crowed over me because I was a Baptist."

Cap'n Sproul lowered his head and wagged it menacingly. Then he walked off a dozen paces and turned on Hiram, having recovered his voice.

"I hain't taken as much interest in religion, Mr. Look, during my life as I ought to have taken. I hain't much of a hand to tie up to sect or creed. But from this time on, I want you to understand that I'm about the liveliest Methody that ever watched the collection platter passed."

"As a Baptist and representing the Baptist church, I make this reply, using no harsh words," said Hiram. He

placed the thumb of his right hand on his nose and the thumb of his left hand on his ear. Then he wagged the fingers on both hands.

Cap'n Sproul turned on his heel and departed.

It developed at the next game that Mr. Look's "nephew" was a batsman who possessed a wallop that was wonder-

ful and weird. Among his other batting achievements in his first game, he slammed a home run when all the bases were full, and wound up by cuffing the umpire's ears because that official—being a very mild young college professor, who was summering with his parents in Scotaze—ventured the statement that he cut inside the third base. The Baptists won the game, and Hiram Look walked off the grounds arm in arm with his brawny "nephew," glaring defiance at all other creeds than the Baptists.

Cap'n Sproul received reports of that game from his wife, and any such remarks as she chose to offer. But he forebore to make retort, and showed such equanimity when she taunted him with his indifference as a public and influential man that she speedily talked herself into silence. But she did reveal the fact that Hiram Look had brazenly insisted before all listeners on the grand stand that the batstick giant was a nephew, and that he advised any Methodists who had relatives who thought they could play baseball to go dig 'em up.

"I'm glad to hear that he has so announced in public," said the cap'n. "That will save all argument."



"What argument?" inquired his wife.

"Seeing that argument is going to be saved, and that there won't be any, what's the good of talking about it?" returned her husband, giving his attention again to a letter that he had been reading when she came home.

"No bad news from anybody, is there?" she asked, with wifely solicitude.

"Nothing except some little family matters of my own." He got up and put on his hat. "I'm going to walk down to the railroad station. Put on another plate—there'll be company."

Half an hour later, Cap'n Sproul came plodding up the village street toward his house, hands behind his back, a grim look on his countenance. At his heels followed a grotesque figure of a young man. The stranger was more than six feet tall, and was propped on legs that seemed to separate almost under his chin into members that were curved with a regular wishbone arc. His arms were long, and each was finished off into a gigantic fist. From one fist dangled a little valise not much bigger than a loaf of baker's bread. The stranger was chewing tobacco vigorously, and was spitting to right and left, and snarling wheezy ejaculations when anybody stared at him.

After he had piloted his guest within the gate of the Sproul domains, the cap'n turned and looked the stranger over with prolonged scrutiny.

"When I wrote in to that agency, I told 'em I wanted something special," he informed the new arrival. "I reckon I've got it."

"Youse called on for a pitcher, and youse got him," wheezed the other. "My looks is my own business—see? I gets peeved very easy if anybody lamps me too much."

"I ain't in any ways inclined to tire out my eyes on you," retorted the cap'n. "But now that we're on the subject of temper, I may as well warn you that I'm a little touchy myself. You and me will get along better if no remarks are passed. Now, what's your name?"

"Beasy McGuirk."



"I'll just have to toss 'em to you," averred Mr. McGuirk.

"It seems to fit you. Get rid of that chaw, and come into the house.

"Louada Murilla," stated Cap'n Sproul to the astonished matron who met them at the door, "this is a son that I've adopted, and to-morrow being Sunday, he will join a class in the Methodist Sunday school—and then, being a member of my family and fully qualified from the religious end, he will pitch baseball against them Baptists."

"What kind of con is this?" inquired Mr. McGuirk, with sudden suspicion and much acerbity. "I ain't no long-lost child, nor I ain't no Sunday-schooler, neither. I'm up here to play baseball, and I——"

Cap'n Sproul yanked the little valise away from his guest and tossed it into a corner.

"You're shipping before the mast, and you're taking orders from *me*!" he gritted. "You'll get the pay agreed on, and steak and pertaters three times a day. And keep your yawp quiet, both here and around this town. Your voice ain't pleasant to listen to."

Mr. McGuirk evidently knew the ring of authority when he heard it in the human voice, and subsided.

"But he's such an awful-looking creature!" exploded Mrs. Sproul, after their newly adopted "son" had retired to the sanctity of the L chamber that night.

"I ain't entering him for a prize in a church-fair baby show," stated the cap'n. "I ordered a baseball pitcher. And I wouldn't have cared if they had sent me a gorilla, providing he can pitch balls that Hime Look's batter can't hit. I don't know anything about baseball and I never want to know anything about it; but as near as I can find out, if t'other side can't hit the ball, they can't win the game."

"It's noble of you to take as much interest, Aaron, and I'll try not to think of his looks. Handsome is as handsome does. I knew you'd come around

and help our dear church as soon as you reflected and saw we needed it."

"Louada Murilla," said the cap'n severely, "this has nothing to do with religion. It's a personal matter between Hime Look and myself, and is intended to show him that the next time a friend comes to him and asks a favor, he'd better keep his hands down where they belong, and make less Baptist gestures."

Mrs. Sproul found this rather cryptic, but she knew better than to prod her spouse with further questions.

Cap'n Sproul was serenely oblivious to the sensation he created when he escorted his protégé to the Methodist Sunday school next day. He curtly informed the astonished superintendent that Mr. McGuirk was a member of his family and had a hankering for Sunday-school work and also was willing to learn how to play baseball. Mr. McGuirk sat sullenly on the end of a bench, holding a lesson paper that the cap'n had shoved into his hands and occasionally staring down at it as he might have surveyed an asp. The pastor of the church was teaching the class in which the cap'n had installed himself and his charge, and when, in the progress of the lesson of the day, it came Mr. McGuirk's turn to read a verse of Scripture, the student only scowled at the pastor's urbane and rather timorous request.

Cap'n Sproul shoved an admonitory elbow into Mr. McGuirk's ribs.

"Nuttin' doin'!" growled the pupil.

"Read that, I say!" hissed the cap'n, his broad thumb marking the spot on the leaflet.

"Nuttin' doin', and dat goes—see?" affirmed Mr. McGuirk, with emphasis. "'Cause I never doped out readin' nor writin'. Yah! I got you on that!" he declared, turning triumphant gaze on the cap'n.

For the rest of the session he jogged

his toe over his knee, his eyes on the floor.

"All I've got to say to you is this," remarked the cap'n, on their way home from Sunday school, "if you ain't pitcher enough to make up to me all of what I'm going through with you in this town, you'll get some of the holes in that education of yours filled up, and the filling will get tamped down good and solid!"

"Dat's all right," declared Mr. McGuirk. "Sooner you gets down to the real game where there's somethin' doin' for me in my right and proper line, the sooner you and me will begin to hitch. So far, I seem to be up against a bunch of nuts."

The next forenoon, Cap'n Sproul further signalized his new interest in baseball by getting the catcher of the Methodist nine and the new pitcher into action behind the Sproul barn.

"I'll have to jest toss 'em to you," averred Mr. McGuirk. "Dey's no rube catcher dat's got a mitt strong enough to hold me when I lets loose."

The cap'n sat on an overturned wheelbarrow and critically inspected the work of his adopted son. Mr. McGuirk called attention to his drops, his outshoots, his fadeaways.

"Don't know nothing about that—don't care nothing about it—don't want to get any baseball sculch into my head at my time of life," objected Cap'n Sproul. "I simply reckon, as I look at you perform them antics, that I've got my money's worth."

"T'ought I could show youse somethin'," assented the pitcher, exhibiting the first smile he had shown since his arrival in Scotaze. It was a fearful contortion of his features—that smile.

"Do that to 'em once in a while, too," advised the cap'n. "When you twist yourself all up into knots like you do before you fire the ball, you'll get 'em to feeling pretty nervous—they can't help feeling nervous. It would scare

even me—and I'm used to strange sights, having sailed around the world ten times. But if you make up that face at them Baptists, there won't be nothing to it—you'll paralyze 'em."

"I quits right here and now," wheezed Mr. McGuirk. "I ain't no beauty, and I knows it—but you can't flip me a slur like that and have me stand for it." He smashed the ball upon the ground and stamped on it with his heel.

But the cap'n wasn't disturbed by this outburst.

"You might just as well make your face your fortune," he advised his protégé. "Lot's of folks do it in this world. I'll give you ten dollars extra for the first game if you'll make up that face."

Mr. McGuirk smiled again, in spite of his resentment.

"That's the idee, son. Do it that way and I shan't begretch the money a mite."

The Methodist nine, controlled to that extent by Cap'n Sproul, did not waste Mr. McGuirk on any games with the tailenders in the league. For some weeks all the local money and interest had been backing the Methodists and the Baptists. The other nines had been stripped of all the best players—it was wonderful how those two creeds seemed to appeal to the faithful Sunday-school students who could play the fastest ball.

At last the day came when the chief rivals entered the arena.

The grand stand was packed; the standing room was taken.

Hiram Look, posted on the stand directly behind the catcher's position, did not appear highly gratified when Cap'n Aaron Sproul pushed down through the crowd and politely asked his friend to "scrouge over a little" and give him room.

"I hain't been tending out on games any," confided the cap'n, still unctuously polite. "But I happened past

here to-day, and saw all the crowd, and thought I'd come in. Any particular excitement?"

Hiram gave him a side glance of venom.

"Don't try to mealy-mouth me," he growled. "You know as well as I do that these two teams are tied for first place, and you're here to watch that land crab you've imported. If he wasn't a spavined down-and-outer, I'd protest him."

"It doesn't seem to me that you and I had ought to get into any row over the relatives we've dug up," purred the cap'n. "Least said about relatives, the better. After I noticed what you was doing for *your* Sunday school, I felt sort of ashamed of hanging back and not helping *my* Sunday school—seeing that it was only a matter of scaring up a relative—adopting a son who could play ball. It's nice to help struggling Sunday schools. And I hope it ain't bothering you to have me sit here. I shan't make no disturbance. Probably won't do anything but rap my thumbnails together for applause or wave my handkercher once in a while."

"You won't be provoked to do any applauding," snapped Hiram. "If you had known anything about baseball, you never would have let 'em work off that McGuirk onto you. He's a joke."

"That's right—he's a comic-looking fellow."

"I mean he can't play ball, and never could. I didn't intend to tell you till after the game, but I may as well rub it in right now. It's all a put-up job. I'm on the inside of baseball, and I told the agency boys to slip you a real lemon. Said you'd never know the difference. So now go ahead and enjoy yourself." Hiram emitted considerable loud laughter, and was joined by his adherents who were within hearing.

But Cap'n Sproul did not show that his equanimity was in any way jarred. He did not even change countenance

when the grotesque McGuirk wobbled his bow-legged course to the pitcher's mound and was hailed with much hilarity as "little boy Sproul." The grand stand bellowed laughter and jeers, and even the Methodist fans seemed to be mightily ashamed of this champion. They were more ashamed a moment later. Mr. McGuirk wound himself up slowly and awkwardly and delivered a ball. But he seemed to retain all the twist in himself. The ball would not have bothered a high-school girl. The batter "lammed it out" for a home run, and Mr. McGuirk stood chewing tobacco and watching the sphere soar against the blue sky.

Hiram Look pounded Cap'n Sproul on the back in the exuberance of his delight.

"Enjoy yourself, Aaron," he entreated. "You've got a champion pitcher there—but he got his championship by pitching coppers in a saloon. Let's all arise and sing that good old Methodist tune, 'Bringing in the Sheaves.'"

Mr. McGuirk, having recovered the ball, inspected it carefully, as if he rather expected to find wings growing on it. Discovering nothing that would explain its recent flight, he rubbed it in the dirt and stood up and looked at the batter. The new man up was the burly individual whom Hiram Look sponsored as a long-lost nephew.

The first ball was a far-and-wide one. The second was as far and wide on the other side.

The batter, with the assistance of thumb, nose, and waggling fingers, gave what Cap'n Sproul had previously denominated as "a Baptist gesture." Mr. McGuirk allowed his face to twist into one of those horrible grimaces that he thought was a smile. Then he drove a straight ball at the batter—a ball that was a very fair imitation of a bullet. The batter fell flat on his back in order to dodge it. He was barely up and back

at the plate when Mr. McGuirk launched another air borer, and the umpire, dodging at the same time as the batter, called a strike.

"I'll be cussed if I'll stand for that kind of ball playing!" roared Hiram Look, leaping up, and his faction on the grand stand rose tumultuously with him. "He's aiming at the batter. He's trying to kill our men off. That ain't ball playing—it's massyree. He'll be throwing rocks next—he's a low-down barroom bum."

"I don't propose to have a scholar in our Methodist Sunday school referred to in any such fashion," protested Cap'n Sproul, and his sea tones carried that protest to all parts of the stand.

"He's a credit to a Sunday school—he is!" averred Hiram.

"As much of a one as is that hunk of chuck beef you call a nephew," retorted the cap'n.

"That wa'n't no strike," roared Hiram. He got the attention of his "nephew" by wildly waving his arm. "You go ahead and take your base, and you'll be backed up by the whole Baptist Church."

Cap'n Sproul was also doing a little wigwagging with his arms. Mr. McGuirk seemed to get the general gist of what was wanted. At any rate, he shot another ball, and his target was the husky batter who had turned his back to him, listening to his mentor on the grand stand. The ball caught the target fairly between the shoulders and dropped him; he lay gasping for breath.

Then all the repressed rancor between factions, the rancor that had been simmering for weeks, the grudges that had been nursed by underhand barterings and solicitations and bribings, and all the bitter jealousies of the contest, broke forth.

At first men and women began to shout protests in general. Then they became more personal. Then there were arguments with near neighbors on

the stand. Then women beat each other with their parasols and men buffeted other men's faces with open palms. Cap'n Sproul, staring into the thick of this conflict, saw two sisters, each the wife of a Sunday-school superintendent, Baptist and Methodist respectively, tearing the hats from each other's head.

"This gun has been loaded to the muzzle for some time," muttered the cap'n. "It only needed somebody to come along and snap the trigger. I reckon I've done it. And it ain't no place for a wicked sinner like me among this Sunday-school crowd."

On his way through the press, he found his wife, and dragged her with him.

"You'd better come along," he advised her. "You ain't so able a fighter as the rest of 'em."

Mr. McGuirk, with a bleeding nose and two black eyes, overtook the Sprouls when they were halfway home.

"If they hadn't let up on me so that they could lick the umpire before they forgot it," he panted, "youse would have had a funeral on your hands. Wot t'ell's biting you rubes up in this bunch of alfalfa, anyway? One day it's Sunday school and the next it's a riot—and there don't no hamfat thumb his nose at me, not when I've got anything to throw at him."

"I dunno whether what you done was according to the rules of baseball or not—and I probably shan't ever know, seeing that I'm in no ways interested in the game," acknowledged the cap'n. "But according to my way of thinking, you done just right. Here's your money, and, seeing that your luggage ain't in any ways hefty, you'd better sneak out of town by back ways and go home to where you come from—and it must be a queer place, wherever it is."

Mr. McGuirk seemed to be too disgusted to make comments.



He departed promptly.

That evening, Hiram Look came storming over to Cap'n Sproul's house, but he could not dent the smooth surface of the cap'n's amiability. The cap'n sat in the lee of the vines on his porch, and smoked and gazed off into the twilight skies.

"The league has been busted. They're too ashamed of themselves and of baseball to play any more games," complained the old showman.

"I had an idee that they would be when I drifted away from the grounds this afternoon."

"You are held responsible for the whole thing."

"Oh, I'm used to being misjudged in

this world. And has your neph'y got his breath back?"

Hiram looked his friend up and down with blistering gaze, and seemed to be searching his soul for suitable retort.

"Seeing that you and me have sort of taken our stand as leaders in Sunday-school work in this town, Hiram," the cap'n hastened to interject, "don't you think we'd better confine our talk just now to the weather and the prospects for garden sass? This baseball business seems to make folks forget how to be genteel and high class."

Mr. Look arose and went home. He seemed to distrust his powers of self-control.



### A Meadow Brook

SO thick along this narrow stream  
 Fern fringe and long sharp grasses dress  
 Its intimate banks, you lose its gleam;  
 Only in bluebird time is stress  
 And noise instead of quietness.

Save in those hoyden springtide hours,  
 It has the faintest song to sing;  
 But down its margin troop the flowers,  
 And alder boughs their tassels fling  
 Because of that soft, murmurous thing.

So like some gentle lives! You hear  
 No babbling voice, must stoop to know  
 Their shy, but limpid deeps; yet, near,  
 Rich flowers of good spring up to show  
 The precious thing that lies below!

—RHEEM DOUGLAS.



ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. FUGSLEY

Page's opinion she represented the sum of all the "other things" that were happening in New York. And a young lady isn't expected to know before she's told that a perfectly strange man has spent three days of fearless, dare-devil riding solely in the hope of winning one smile of recognition.

As long as Miss Bond sat at the ring side, Page was content to perform, but the moment he overheard her propose that she go to a *thé dansant*, the contest lost interest.

Miss Bond didn't like the horse show, anyway. She sat in the family box to please her mother, and Mrs. Bond went with her to watch the dancers solely to prove that she was capable of making a return sacrifice. Not that Miss Bond didn't love horses—she often stopped at the curb and made friends with the tired cab horses; but the sleek, well-groomed animals at the Garden simply didn't need her sympathy, and didn't receive it.

The staccato music sent little chills of delight along her dance nerves. She would have "given her head" to be able to join in the measured swish, swish, swish of the one-steppers. As it was, she could only sigh, wring her hands ecstatically, and look more beautiful than ever. Miss Bond, be it known without further secrecy on this point, was beautiful. Girls who are heroines in honeymoon stories usually are. But Miss Bond had been pretty ever since she had stopped being an ugly baby,

DOUGLAS PAGE passed his ring number and riding crop to the groom and slid from the saddle.

"You'll have to take Greywing around the next time yourself, William. I'm through for to-day."

"But you won't be leaving like this, sir, and missing the blue, with the mare jumping like a greyhound? Why——" William halted in utter dismay.

"All right. You do the honors for me. I wouldn't go in again if she could take eight bars, clean. There are other things happening in this town besides a horse show."

At the Twenty-sixth Street entrance to Madison Square Garden, Page hailed a taxi and was whisked off, leaving the reputation of the famous Page stables and the Tomahawk Hunt Club to Greywing and a groom.

Thirty-five minutes later, in street clothes, he was sitting at a tea table in a fashionable hotel. Across the twenty feet of polished floor, cleared for the dancers, sat Miss Katherine Bond, who sipped her tea daintily, paid attention to her bored-looking mother, and never so much as dreamed that in

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nineteen years before, and would have been just as much so without having it said here.

Page had done nothing but look at her since her first hour at the show. And he was still watching her, so carefully and unobtrusively, however, that when Miss Bond and her mother went home, they carried no impression of a lonely man at a table by himself, and no suspicion that he had followed them to their door in a taxi. But he did, and he made a mental note of the number of the house in indelible ink at the same time.

When the horse show closed, Page sent his hunters home with William, and wired the folks in Virginia that he would be in the city a fortnight, perhaps a month, longer.

Meeting Miss Bond after these formalities had been dispensed with was "a horse of another color," or, as Goldy Goldberg, who works in a cloak'n'sootery on Twenty-fourth Street, would say: "That was something else again."

Page had two facts to begin with—he knew Miss Bond's name and her address. Give a philosopher or a scientist two facts of which they are positive, and they will evolve a new world in thought or prove that the moon *is* made of green cheese.

But when a man is in love, he doesn't usually make as good use of his working hypothesis. At least, Mr. Page didn't, and as to whether or not he was in love, he hadn't stopped to ask. He'd merely concluded that Miss Bond was the girl he had been looking for ever since he had read the nursery rhyme stating that girls are made of "sugar and spice and everything nice." Granting that he could read when he was seven, he had been subconsciously looking for Miss Bond eighteen years.

Absurd? No. Romance.

Should you ask the woman who goes to ride in the park with her dog in her lap and who sits looking sternly at

the buttons on her coachman's livery whether there is any such thing as romance, she will tell you flatly there is not. And the gentleman who spent the past four months figuring what part of his fortune the income tax will absorb will agree.

Douglas Page was different. The following morning he dropped into a stationery shop on the avenue.

"I want some cards engraved," he instructed the clerk, "like this." He produced a slip that read:

M. KEITH MONTAGUE,

Instructor in Modern Dances.

Introduction required.

Telephone: Plaza 33050.

"How many of these do you want?" asked the clerk.

"One," said Page, with a quizzical smile. "I'll call for that Monday, if you will have the plate made at once."

In mailing this card to Miss Bond, Page wasn't making the best use of his working hypothesis. He might as easily have gone to the *thé dansant* again and have presented his own card with the explanation that he was a dancing master, that he had observed that Miss Bond didn't dance, that he would be charmed to have her as a pupil, that he was sure she could learn quickly, and such other pleasantries that dancing masters are accustomed to feed a prospective pupil.

Only one part of Page's card interested him, anyway, and that was the condition tucked in small type in the left-hand corner of the card: "Introduction required." In fact, in deciding to pose as a dancing master in order to meet Miss Bond, his plan carried him no further than the introduction.

Page had made one worse mistake. By woeful misjudgment he had failed to take Mrs. Bond into account. The card served only to shift the respon-



sibility of an introduction from himself to Miss Bond, and, as a foregone conclusion, he waited a painful number of days without having his telephone jingle once.

Page was desperate, and, being desperate, you must forgive him for the rest.

He went up through the park to a bench directly in front of the Bond house, sat down, and began to read—at least, he pretended very well to be reading. About four-thirty the book grew suddenly uninteresting. He saw Miss Bond come out of the grilled door and start down the avenue. Page had difficulty in keeping his heart inside his shirt. He put the book into his pocket and crossed the street. He would have given his fortune if Miss Bond had dropped a glove or a handkerchief or a pearl necklace, or some such trifle that would have given him the opportunity to pick it up and say, "You're welcome." But how many times has the lady you were wishing to have faint in your arms done so?

Some seven blocks down the avenue, she turned into a door over which a tarpaulin cover had been erected to the curb. Page watched her drop a card into the butler's platter and disappear. Heaven only knew when he would so much as catch sight of her again. He leaned weakly against one of the posts supporting the awning. Four or five men came up and went in; other girls came; elderly ladies drove up, and were assisted from their limousines. It seemed simple enough—the mere dropping of a card into a plate and you were admitted.

Page had attended similar affairs often. He was not a stranger in a strange land, but a stranger on very familiar ground. Inside, somewhere among a hundred or more who were pushing their way from the reception room to the punch bowl, he believed he could find Miss Katherine Bond. A

wild impulse seized him. He might as well have been a tiny grain of steel dropped suddenly near a powerful magnet. He went in under the tarpaulin cover, dropped his card into the plate, and allowed a stern, silent fellow to have his coat and hat. At another door a duplicate of the first man asked his name and repeated it in a loud voice. It was too late to draw back; he was in a current that took him straight to the receiving line. An elderly lady took his hand and raised her eyebrows and lorgnette in acknowledgment of his presence, then she passed him to the next person in line—a young girl carrying a bouquet of gardenias.

"I don't believe I recall your name," she said, smiling.

"Montague — M-o-n-t-a-g-u-e," spelled Page calmly. "I don't see how you could forget it." Then he laughed.

The girl with the gardenias laughed, too—a trifle uneasily.

"I am looking for Miss Bond. Has she passed this way recently?" asked Page.

"Oh, Katherine? Yes, certainly. She's in the other room at the punch bowl. Just a moment while I speak to these people, and I'll take you in."

The girl with the gardenias took Page's arm, and they passed through the portières, into a swirl of aigrets, furs, long coats, chatter, and perfume. Miss Palmer was far from suspicious. It was her début party, and she was leaving no loose ends. Getting up to the punch bowl was a matter of only a little time and push.

"Katherine," she said, maneuvering Page well into the foreground, "here's a man who, I think, wants some of *your* punch."

Girls at début parties usually smile at nice-looking men who come and ask to be served. Miss Bond was not an exception, but there was not the least flicker of recognition in her blue eyes, and if she had ever seen Page before,

he wasn't able to guess it from her expression.

"Yes, please," he said, speaking as easily as the consciousness of being in her presence and a resultant thick tongue would permit. "Would you mind giving a hungry man a drink?"

Miss Bond handed him a filled glass, which he took mechanically. He was losing his head, and he hadn't so much as tasted the punch. He raised his glass:

"Here's to another *thé dansant* at the Revere."

"You've got me confused with some other girl," taunted Miss Bond. "I never danced there in my life. I don't dance, anyway."

"Had you thought of taking lessons?" asked the undaunted impostor.

"Perhaps. Do you know anything about a Mr. Montague, who gives lessons?"

"Yes, I know him quite well."

"Do you, really? Mother is awfully cross at me for wanting to begin. You see, I've been in a girls' school in Rome for two years, where they didn't allow us to breathe."

"Why don't you begin under Mr. Montague?"

"I haven't even met him."

Page smiled, showing his firm white teeth.

"Oh, I'll fix that all right. How would to-morrow at ten o'clock do for a lesson?"

Miss Bond nodded dubiously. "Very well, I suppose," she agreed, thinking the while of what her mother would think.

"Then I'll see that he is there on time," said Page, with a palpable air of mystery.

In the receiving line, the lady of the lognette nudged the girl with the gardenias.

"Who was that nice-looking young man who came just now?"

"I don't think I've ever seen him be-

fore. He asked for Katherine, and I guess he must have been on her list."

Douglas Page left the Palmer party in a state of blissful chaos that permitted him little sleep for the rest of the night. The disconcerting part of meeting Miss Bond face to face was that she was more wonderful than ever. At times Page had hoped that when he did meet her so, the strange and inexplicable fascination would vanish. The fact that it hadn't was disconcerting enough in itself. And in the morning he was to give her a dancing lesson!

The Bond home was a suppressed and dignified place. The English butler was impressive; the ancestral portraits stared down critically at the person who dared enter; and the heroic figure of Joan of Arc to the right of the broad stairway had the effect of throwing Page into a near-panic of fright.

The music room had been cleared for action. In the corridor were rolled-up rugs, chairs had been drawn back against the walls, and a *passée*, but prim, governess sat stiffly at the piano, waiting. She nodded to Page, and he dropped weakly into a chair.

After a while Mrs. Bond swept into the room, followed by her daughter.

"Mr. Montague?" she asked, extending him four fingers.

Page got to his feet in a most undancing-masterlike posture, and bowed his head in acquiescence to the inevitable.

"My daughter," panted Mrs. Bond, who had walked all the way downstairs, "has persuaded me to allow her to take up dancing. I am not in sympathy with these modern dances, but I suppose she'll have to learn some time."

Mrs. Bond took her seat, completely filling the chair and extending over the front of it like a cliff. Page and Miss Bond were left awkwardly on the floor. He had an intuitive hunch that it was



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time to make a move. His heart was rattling against his chest bone and his face burned.

"You didn't tell me yesterday that you were coming!" exclaimed Miss Bond. "Why, mother, isn't it odd? I saw Mr. Montague yesterday at Gladys' tea, and didn't know it was he."

"What shall we begin with?" asked Page stiffly. "Do you prefer the one-step, the tango, or the maxixe?"

"I think I'll try the one-step first," said Miss Bond.

Page nodded toward the piano, and

the piano began to play. He put his arm around Miss Bond awkwardly. It was the first time he'd ever put his arm about any one in the capacity of a dancing teacher. He was conscious of that, too. He found himself saying:

"Don't bend your knees any more than you have to, or move your shoulders. Think about the music, and walk as if you were walking on eggs. When you spin, use one foot as a pivot for your weight and the other to furnish the momentum that sends you around—that's fine!"

Miss Bond breathed a "Yes, I'll try," over his shoulder, and Page felt that he could dance the Indian snake dance as long as she tried it with him. The governess played on in measures so precise that the music sounded like a Chinese tom-tom. Having satisfied herself that Mr. Montague hadn't come to kidnap her daughter, Mrs. Bond got up and marched out of the room.

Page breathed more freely. His pupil was supple and willowy, and it was necessary to explain a step only once; often she caught it by watching his feet. The hour went by before either realized it. The governess offered the first protest in a sigh that penetrated even the deaf ears of the dancing master. He took out his watch.

"I suppose that will do for to-day. Shall I come Monday at the same hour?"

Miss Bond nodded, and he started to go.

"Wait a moment, please." She halted, confused. "You haven't said good-by."

Page put out a hand. When he withdrew it, there was a ten-dollar note crumpled in his fist. He hadn't thought of money before, and barely escaped spoiling everything by handing it back without explanation. The best he could do was to pretend not to know that she had given him money at all; Miss Bond pretended not to know that she had, either.

He crushed the bill in his hand and went down the steps.

Seeing Miss Bond had thrown Page's thinking machinery entirely out of gear. No matter what he began to think about, the trail always led to the same spot. He knew now that he was in love, and in love to the extent of wanting other people to know it. He was so proud of it that he told Miss Bond herself less than two weeks after her first lesson.

"I had quite a shock yesterday," said

Miss Bond, at the beginning of the chat that now came regularly after a lesson. "Do you remember Miss Palmer's tea?"

Page looked "yes," and sat up with interest.

"All the while I've been thinking that you had known Gladys, and she's been thinking that you were one of the men I'd suggested. Would you mind telling me how and why you went?"

Page laughed. "It was shocking," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, and then he told her what he had done, and why.

"But I wouldn't have done it for any one except you," he ended. "I wouldn't have done it for myself. I suppose, if that were the only way, I'd go through everything again. Some time I intend going to see Miss Palmer and explaining why I came, uninvited. Don't you think she will forgive me?"

"I think it was outrageous! I don't see how any one could forgive you!"

"It isn't that I have sacrificed my self-respect or that I have any less respect for conventions. But conventions, after all, are merely the fences that society builds to keep the weak from breaking out of bounds. I don't mean to imply that I am strong enough not to need these fences. But in this case it was the one obstacle that kept me from meeting you. As to the other name and the dancing lessons, I simply hadn't thought of the consequences. When a man is in love, he doesn't weigh consequences. Can't you believe in me in spite of all this? Can't you see my point of view?"

Miss Katherine Bond, in spite of herself, was the granddaughter of the old gentleman of the firm, cold mouth and the dignified old lady of the brocaded gown whose portraits at that moment glared down over them. There was both coldness and dignity in her answer:

"No, I can't see. I don't understand how you can expect me to overlook or forgive. The whole affair is almost repulsive to me. The idea of—"

She would have continued had not Page got suddenly to his feet.

"I am sorry—more so than you can ever know," he cried, and pride gave him eloquence. "I can forgive myself only because I love you. Some day you may arrive at my point of view. Meanwhile—I wish for you—all happiness—"

Winter comes late in the South. The hunts of the Tomahawk Club, which usually began in November, had been postponed until almost Christmas. The twenty-odd English foxhounds in the Page pack had been chewing one another up in the kennels to work off their surplus energy, and both thongs of George Scott's two-pound rawhide dog whip were frayed at the ends.

The master of hounds was fighting with himself even more fiercely. There's a certain thrill in starting across country on a hunter, with the chances even that you or the horse, or both, may not come back alive. Douglas Page was riding that sort of horse and waiting indifferently for the chances to break against him.

In New York things were still "happening." Miss Katherine Bond was the most successful and "impersonal" of the season's débutantes. At every ball she was trailed by a swarm of hungry-eyed men ranging from eighteen to forty years of age. She possessed all the charm and vivacity and intelligence that the stogiest old bachelors had waited years to discover.

And then something seemed to snap; society grew stale, commonplace, and a waste of time. Miss Bond canceled her engagements; specialists were called in and consulted. They diagnosed the case as a nervous breakdown due to overgoing, dancing, and late hours.

Miss Bond passively accepted the decision as correct, but deep in her own heart she knew the truth. With the aid of trained nurses and a strict diet, she tried to fight off the conviction. But it was a losing game.

Weeks went by without apparent change for the better; doctors met again for long and expensive consultations. They made blood tests, lung tests, and nerve tests, but discovered nothing. In desperation, they advised a change of climate and environment, soft air, solitude, no mail, men, or excitement in any form.

So a week before the first Tomahawk hunt, Miss Bond, her mother, a maid, and a nurse left New York for Walnut Hill, Virginia—three hours from Washington and about three hours from anywhere else, except Sedgefield, the Page estate. Mrs. Bond had selected the place of her daughter's seclusion, and Katherine had acquiesced in the inevitable without a murmur. Miss Bond played cards by herself, took long rambles over the red roads, and sat in a steamer chair on the veranda, looking out over the hills toward the haze-cradled peaks of the Blue Ridge.

Douglas Page found her in the steamer chair. He had ridden up through the avenue of locust trees to the house on a foam-flecked horse, had scraped his muddy boots on the iron mat, and was about to lift the brass knocker, when he heard some one call his name.

Miss Bond got up and came to meet him. When one is more happy than surprised, one looks happy. Miss Bond didn't seem a bit surprised.

There wasn't a great deal to be said just at that moment. Page took both her hands and looked at her.

"I heard you were sick," he began, after a while, "and I came to know if there was anything we could do to make you more comfortable?"

"I've been sick," said Miss Bond,





*"There's not a great deal to tell you since we've danced again," said Miss Bond bravely.*

with a slight accent on the "been." "Thank you very much for taking the trouble to come. I didn't know you were within a thousand miles of here. Won't you sit down and talk to me?"

We usually use words to express our thought, but sometimes we use them to try to conceal what we are thinking. Both Miss Bond and Page made heroic efforts to hide the real current of their thoughts, and failed utterly. The conversation rambled through an absurd variety of sensible and, therefore, uninteresting topics.

Page got up, pulled on his gloves, and stood tapping his boots with his crop.

"We are having a run on Monday," he announced, "and a hunt breakfast at home, with a dance afterward. I'll give you until Monday to get well. Will you come?"

"I'm feeling a great deal better now," promised Miss Bond, without looking at him.

Page had been sick of the same disease, but he'd fought it off with will power and brawn instead of doctors and nurses. When he went home, he didn't go cross country or take a single doubtful jump. The fact was significant. For the first time in weeks he was a bit concerned with the business of living.

The day of the hunt was the sort that makes men wonder why poets select moonlit nights and Indian-summer sunsets to write poems about. There was a tang in the air that made mere breathing a passion; the trees on the mountains ten miles distant were cut distinctly against a cloudless sky.

The run lay over some six miles of undulating, open country. Miss Bond watched the pack and the red-coated horsemen from an eminence in front of the Page house. At least, she watched one rider, who led them all, and who, after the kill, gave something to her that the others called a brush, but that was really the tail of a fox.

You must have anticipated, however, that Miss Bond was more interested in the dance. Somehow, the brilliance of the day seemed to have been caught and released in the ballroom. Douglas Page forgot that he was host to the Tomahawk Hunt Club; he forgot the weeks of waiting and pain; he forgot the stinging rebuke this cold, proper girl had given him in the city.

The atmosphere of the dance seemed to get into his blood; the room swam before his eyes; the music was like a narcotic that lifted him into a paradise of sound and movement; he was a sort of half god, dancing with a goddess who followed his every movement with consummate ease and grace.

They gave themselves in utter abandon to the music. Lights played in varied colors on the dancers in their brilliant costumes; streamers were thrown like a web over the whole company; and the couples whirled and spun like little flies caught, and happy to die, in the tangled mesh woven by a great spider.

Something in the thrill of dancing with Miss Bond again plunged Douglas Page into an intoxication that numbed and shut out the old pain.

At the eleventh hour he attempted to give her advice.

"You really mustn't dance too much and make yourself ill again."

"Then why do you ask me?" she taunted, and at the same time she managed to look him squarely in the eyes for the first time since she had come. "I guess I'd better not dance this one. Come, let's go where we can talk. I've—"

They went out into the billiard room, and he lifted her to a seat on the green table.

"There's not a great deal to tell you since we've danced again," said Miss Bond bravely.

Page was leaning against the table,

studying the bow on the toe of his pump.

"But I do want you to know that I'm not sick any more. I have learned that it's really a matter of the point of view——"

Page turned to her suddenly, with a strange, new light in his eyes.

"You mean, Katherine——"

"I mean that I came here to-night to tell you that I don't care any more what other people think, and that if you don't go back with me, I'm going to stay here with you. And"—Miss Bond was struggling hard to finish—"I think you are horrid to make it so hard for me to tell you. Don't you see I'm breaking every convention that ex-

ists, just to prove that I've come to your point of view?"

Two strong arms lifted her from the table.

"I've been praying that you would," he said. Then, later: "But don't let's go back to the city. Let's go to Switzerland or France to stay as long as we please, where we please. And there will be a dance every night; a sort of tango honeymoon, we'll call it."

Miss Bond saw nothing unconventional in a tango honeymoon.

"I don't believe," she whispered, "there could be anything nicer."

"Then," said Page, "will you please give me the next three hundred and sixty-five thousand dances?"



### Good Night

GOOD night, dear heart. With little arms clasped tight  
About my neck, and sleepy lids drooped low,  
I've heard you whisper, brokenly and slow,  
A soft good night.

A dimpled cheek upon my shoulder there;  
A drowsy smile that struggled hard with sleep;  
Long silken lashes and a tangled heap  
Of golden hair.

Good night, dear heart. Oft at the twilight's fall  
You've told me, in your boyish, trusting way,  
The pleasures and the sorrows of the day,  
Its sins and all.

And now, good night. Those limbs that seemed so strong  
Have tired, oh, so early! and the day  
Seems very far—so very far—away,  
The night so long.

But with the dawn those lips so still and white  
Shall smile again; and in the glad new light  
My arms shall hold you close. And so good night,  
Dear heart, good night.

RALPH LINN.



# JULIET OF HAPPY HOLLOW

BY STUART B. STONE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

THE seven-piece band of the Thompson & Hackett Dramatic Company was playing a medley in the courthouse yard. The tired, blondined *Desdemonas* and *Elizas* of the troupe huddled just outside the ring of dented, tarnished instruments and yawned. *Doctor Jekyll* who also handled the fireworks in "Faust" and collected tickets at the door, flaunted a crimson banner with letters of tinsel gilt. *Monte Cristo* held to the tugging bloodhounds. "Dode" Simmons, the manager, fidgeted about in silk top hat and linen duster, sizing up the gaping Cobvillians from a box-office standpoint. Dogs barked, small boys shouted, country-bred horses reared and shied.

Professor Theophilus Finney, the musical director, flourished his battered E-flat cornet, and the band slurred from "Swanee Ribber" into "Hot Time In the Old Town To-night." *Mephisto* was making a wonderful slide on the trombone, when Minnie Belle stole up to the edge of the circle, wishing in her heart that she were a fate-favored actress.

Minnie Belle had left Uncle Dunc and Aunt Cassie unloading sassafras root and maple sugar from the spring wagon at the back door of the Honest Dollar Store. She had slipped away

without asking permission; she had even been afraid to tell Aunt Cassie that the bronze turkey feather in the good lady's relic of a hat was broken, lest they detect the Great Desire in her face. As the band a-wa-a-yed down south in Dixie, she listened in ecstasy, wondering how the townspeople could resist joining hands and dancing about. She gazed at the blasé ladies of the drama and marveled at their weariness. She sought out her cousin, Josh Tucker, the liveryman, and asked, with a catch in her voice, concerning the manager.

"There he is," drawled Josh. "That smart-lookin' duck with the stovepipe slickem and the diamond big as a turkey egg. I guess he's about as smooth as they make 'em."

Minnie Belle agreed with Josh. *Simon Legree* was assisting the professor, who combined *Othello* with clog dancing between acts, in a duet from "William Tell." It was entrancing, and Minnie Belle, afire with the divinity of it, approached the manager to speak of the Great Desire. Her heart palpitated so that she feared it would burst; her throat was dry and husky. She could only stand, trembling, tingling, longing, in the glory of his presence, while *Othello* and *Legree*



"There he is," drawled Josh. "That smart-lookin' duck with the stovepipe. I guess he's about as smooth as they make 'em."

died out in a long-drawn minor. Then the professor blew the dust from his slick-worn valves; the dogs ceased to bark; the blasé *Desdemonas* started for the Holcombe House; and the musicians, with cymbals and music racks clattering, headed for the opera house over the Excelsior Feed Store. Minnie Belle followed, for the linen-dustered man would not come that way again.

"Please, Mr. Manager," she faltered, as he prepared to take the dusty stairs, "please, sir, I want to be an actress."

Dode Simmons turned, an impatient scowl on his great, red face.

"Huh!" he snorted. "D'ye think I'm Charlie Frohman? D'ye suppose I'm a bloomin' Broadway angel?"

Minnie Belle did not understand the jargon, but the scowl on the red face was bad for the golden dream.

"Please, please, Mr. Manager," she persisted, speaking rapidly, for the great man had a foot upon the stairs, "please, sir, I can recite lots of pieces. I always do for the Children's Day ex-



ercises and the G. A. R. meetings. And I believe—I just know I could learn to act and dance and sing."

Dode Simmons' scowl changed to a tolerant grin as he watched the girl. "Whew!" he whistled at the tumbled fluff of fine, corn-yellow hair which his cosmetic *Desdemonas* could never simulate. "Darn!" he muttered, as he took in the anxious hazel eyes and the exquisite rose tinting of the cheeks. "Stage-struck!" he chuckled, as he noted the impossible color effects of dress, which, however, could not hide the charm of form and figure.

"Who are you? What's your name? What do you know about repertoire?" he demanded.

Minnie Belle took a step forward, alert enough to recognize her chance. "I'm Minnie Belle Tilden—Squire Tilden's niece, over in Happy Hollow. Let me go with you, Mr. Manager. I'll try so hard!"

Simmons jerked his big thumb over his shoulder. "Come upstairs," he ordered. "We'll see what the professor says."

Minnie Belle tripped upstairs, her heart beating a pitpat of hope. The members of the band were leaving the gaudy little auditorium. Professor Finney, always the last, fretted over the arranging of the music on the racks. The professor was forty-four, fidgety, long-haired, smooth-shaven, dreamy-eyed, and shabby.

"Professor Finney, this is Miss Tilden, of Happy Hollow," announced Simmons. "She wants to be an actress—another Nordica. Just give her a try-out on the ivories."

The professor solemnly inspected the girl. "'Carmen?'" he suggested.

"Sir?" puzzled Minnie Belle.

"Something from 'Martha,' 'Fra Diavolo,' 'The Bohemian Girl?'"

"I can't sing those songs—if that's what you mean," answered Minnie Belle plaintively.

The professor plumped down upon the stool and enticed a rippling scale from the old piano. "'Annie Laurie,'" he indicated, and began a fantastic accompaniment.

Her throat dry as brickdust, her limbs shaking violently, Minnie Belle began: "'Ma-ax-wuh-elton braes are bo-hon-ny—'"

"Humph!" growled Professor Finney, coming to a sudden finale of thumps and discords and drowning the groans of Dode Simmons. The professor turned on the creaking stool and studied the girl. Sympathy struggled with professional disdain for possession of his deep-lined face.

"Buck-and-wing," he questioned, ignoring the manager's winks and grins, "clog—toe business—dialect—black-face—knock-down, drag-out specialties?"

Minnie Belle shook her head. She didn't know just what he meant, but she knew she could not do those things.

The professor sighed and smiled gently. "I guess you'd better go back to Happy Hollow, little girl. Go back to Uncle Hi and the old apple tree, marry some fat, red-headed Si Plunkett, and come into town on Saturdays and picnic days. That's the way to be happy, my dear."

Dode Simmons coughed warningly, and Minnie Belle pleaded: "Oh, don't say that! It's so lonesome in the Hollow—and I want to be an actress so bad! I can learn—I'll try so hard!"

The manager whispered in the professor's ear: "Quit yer knockin', Finn. She's a regular little Venus if you put some clothes on her. She won't want any pay, and you can teach her somethin'—ragtime, slapstick, or somethin'. She'll draw great in the parade—and you know this bunch hasn't got any Lina Cavalieri's in it." He turned to Minnie Belle, who was watching anxiously: "I think you'll do, all right, Miss Tilden, with a little instruction

from the professor. We'll go down to the hotel now."

"I shouldn't advise—I hardly believe Miss Tilden——" began the professor; but Minnie Belle, atingle with the spirit of the Desire and fearful lest Uncle Dunc come for her, followed Simmons down the steps and to the rickety, dingy old Holcombe House.

Minnie Belle was hardly known in Cobville; but, fearful of being apprehended, she remained all afternoon in her room. That night, after supper, the professor, who had been creaming his old E-flat and brushing up on the rôle of *Mr. Hyde*, came up to see her. The professor's iron-gray cowlick had been touched up with hair dye. He gave forth the fragrance of violet water borrowed from one of the ladies.

"Think you'll like messing around these fifty-cents-per, fly-in-the-biscuit hasheries?" he asked.

Minnie Belle smiled faintly. "I got to start somehow. I guess they all start that way."

"Think you'll like to rout out from the covers at four o'clock of mornings to catch dirty accommodation trains? Think you'll like to ride in a smelly livery hack behind a bum band in the daily free parade, rain or shine? Think you'll like to mess up the pretty roses in your cheeks with grease paint—and dance on your left big toe when you're sick and tired and homesick——"

The girl frowned and stamped her foot. "I wish you wouldn't talk to me like that, Professor Finney. I want to be an actress—I want to be a star. I guess there's kicks and cuffs to take, but I've got to start some way. Please—I wish you'd go away."

The professor was persistent. "I've been on the road twenty years, Miss Minnie. Started with the old Howard Minstrels, playing the tuba and doubling in blackface. Been from Maine to Frisco, on the kerosene circuit most of the time. Played everything—*Ham-*

*let, Uncle Tom, Hi Holler, Rip van Winkle.* My *Othello* has been called 'masterly, forceful, tear-compelling.' My *Mephisto* has been described as 'awesome and never to be forgotten.' I've a lot of clippings I'll show you some time. But I tell you it's hard—it's mighty hard for even true genius to be recognized these days, less'n you got a pull on Broadway.

"Look at me—as good a *Macbeth* as you'll find on the Rialto to-day—as good a *Richard Third* as you'll find from York to Seattle—if I do say it myself. And I'm blowing a battered, secondhand E-flat cornet around the pumpkin-vine circuit—and doubling in 'Ten Nights' and 'East Lynne'—and getting one-third my salary on Saturday nights. Now, what chance have you got, Miss Minnie Belle? Don't you think you'd better go back to the cows and the daisies and Aunt Cassie?"

He peered over at the girl and saw that she was crying softly. "Go 'way! Go 'way!" she sobbed. "You hurt me—you give me the blues. But I'm goin' to be a star. I don't care what you say."

The Thompson-Hacketts departed that night for Adamstown. Business had not been good, and Dode Simmons rewarded his Thespians with a very little cash, many explanations, and more promises. Consequently, the tired, cosmetic ladies annihilated dull time on the train by describing their manager in exceedingly uncomplimentary phrases. The professor bought Minnie Belle a box of sweetened popcorn and told her of the time he had played a Catskill imp for Joseph Jefferson. Minnie Belle listened intently. It kept her mind off old gray Moll and the six Poland China piglets at Uncle Dunc's.

Sunday was a very lonesome day for her, and the Great Dream verged on nightmare. On occasions the professor approached her, wistful-eyed, rose-buttoled, and overperfumed; but she

clung to the Dream, and avoided him. The following day, with the excitement of parade and rehearsal, the Dream took on new splendor. She rode in a smart trap with the other ladies of the drama, and the craning and gaping of the crowd were sweet to her soul. Dode Simmons kept her much in evidence that day, and in the borrowed plumes of Mademoiselle de Mille, of the team of Conlin & De Mille, she attracted much favorable attention.

Later in the day she procured a worn, tattered prompt book of "Romeo and Juliet" and began to memorize the balcony scene, embellishing the same with gestures and "business" of her own devising. That evening she huddled on the stage as one of the villagers in "Rip van Winkle," and that night she dreamed that she sang on Broadway.

The Great Dream seemed near to realization, and Minnie Belle, resolutely shutting Uncle Dunc, Aunt Cassie, and the pet Polanders from her mind, would have been deliriously happy had it not been for Professor Finney. The professor bothered her persistently, warning her that she would get no salary; that she would become wrinkled, blondined, and blasé, like the other ladies; and that there could be no happiness on the stage to compare with that of Mrs. Silas Plunkett, of Happy Hollow.

Finding his arguments of no avail, he finally informed her that she could never master the A B C

of acting, and that her voice was better adapted to calling cows than to singing. Then Minnie Belle arose with the queenly wrath of a Rejane and sent him from her. The professor departed with the lingering, hungering, mournful look of a dog forbidden to go jaunting with his master. Dode Simmons, guessing at the situation, commanded the professor to leave the new beauty alone.

The professor became reserved and moody, and for a while he left off the violet water, and there were only a pin and a withered, green stem to show where roses had bloomed on his lapel. He seemed to be studying, planning, scheming; his work fell off; he was se-



"*Annie Laurie*," he indicated, and began a fantastic accompaniment.

verely reprimanded by the manager. Then suddenly his demeanor changed again, and when the company settled in the cobwebbed halls of the Commercial Hotel, at Grand Junction, he once more approached Minnie Belle.

"Learning any lines?" he inquired, with a queer smile. "Been understudying *Eliza* on the ice or *Juliet* in the balcony?"

Minnie Belle looked up eagerly. She had missed him the past few weeks. "Yes," she answered, "the balcony scene. I think it's just grand—where it says, 'O Romeo!'"

"That's the business!" he encouraged. "Suppose I help you with it. Once I played opposite a cousin of Fanny Davenport's in the rôle. But don't say anything to Simmons."

She promised, and he immediately put her through a rehearsal. In the lines where her own judgment had called for vigorous gestures, he applauded, and encouraged her to emphasize the movements. Under his criticism she began to render the part much after the manner of a lady pugilist or trapeze performer. Her pledge to Romeo would have been taken by the casual observer for a dumb-bell exercise; but the professor applauded vociferously. In her climax it looked as if she might dive from the balcony; but he praised, and urged her almost to the verge of jumping over.

All that week, keeping the matter strictly from Simmons, he schooled and drilled the girl into the most emotional and gymnastic *Juliet* on the boards.

For the final night at Grand Junction the professor drilled the orchestra in a weird medley of his own arrangement, to be played between the second and third acts. After the curtain had gone down on *Rip van Winkle* in the Catskills, the professor, wiping the grease paint of a gnome from his countenance, seated himself at the piano and began tremulously on the "Flower

Song." The big audience, anticipating pathos, straightened up and saw that cambric handkerchiefs were available.

Then Minnie Belle, costumed after her own conception of *Juliet*, emerged from the wings and tiptoed slowly across the boards like a woman in a trance. Her great mass of corn-yellow hair tumbled over a robe of yellow cheesecloth; a black feather protruded above her left ear; circlets of tiny sleighbells bound her firm, white wrists, jingling faintly as she moved. The audience craned, uncertain whether it gaped at tragedy or burlesque. Dode Simmons, hovering about the ticket window, wondered what kind of a "turn" the professor had arranged.

Minnie Belle crept to the front of the stage and executed a district-school-literary-exercise curtsy. At the same moment the professor sledge-hammered a thunderous discord in both clefs, while the bass drummer dealt a booming thump to his calfskin. Simmons, fidgeting at the window, muttered "Thunderation!" Minnie Belle assumed a Liberty-enlightening-the-world attitude, and chanted:

"O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"

She paused, arms uplifted, and the trombone executed a terrific slide: "Ta-ra-ra-a-a-a-ah!"

"What kind of crazy stunt is that?" muttered a man in the front row.

"What the deuce!" growled Simmons.

"'Tis but thy name that is my enemy,"

quavered Minnie Belle, bending over the imaginary balcony and thrusting her shapely hands almost in the face of the second fiddle.

"C-r-rash—tee-ooodle-tee-ooodle—tum-tum!" discorded the professor. "T-r-r-r-r-um-m-m! T-r-r-r-r-um-m-m!" rattled the snare drum.



"Yes, and you're gettin' fired!" raged Simmons. "Get out of my sight—you and your second Nordica!"

The audience stirred restlessly.

"That's pretty bum," commented a man in the rear.

Minnie Belle, excited at the boom and tinkle of the piano, brandished her palms at the second fiddle and chanted the plaint of the daughter of Capulet:

"Oh, be some other name! . . . Take all myself. . . . My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words. . . . If they do see thee, they will murder thee. . . ."

The professor manhandled the untuned strings of the tin-panny piano. The bass drummer boomed thunderously. The trombone executed clamorous slides. Dode Simmons, frantic, gesticulated at the professor, at Min-

nie Belle, at the members of the orchestra. Grand Junction waxed restless, facetious, wrothy.

"I didn't pay no half dollar to listen to such tomfoolery," complained some one.

"Rats!" called a boy up front.

"Rotten!" bawled a voice in the rear.

Minnie Belle bade the sweet Montague be true. The house was catcalling, hissing, whistling. The professor was whipping the piano to shreds. Then some one threw a paper wad. It was the cue for a bombardment. Newspapers, tin cigar boxes, palm-leaf fans—the odd miscellany of a hundred



pockets—whizzed toward the stage. Dode Simmons mounted a chair.

"One moment, gentlemen—cease! Stop, please! I will explain——"

A great wad of compressed newspaper struck him in the mouth. The audience arose and yelled. A woman somewhere fainted. The Thompson-Hacketts scrambled for the back door.

In the darkness without, Professor Finney found Minnie Belle. "I'm afraid—I'm scared—— Oh, I want to go home!" she moaned.

"You come with me, little girl—little Minnie Belle," he said, with a strangely satisfied chuckle. He grasped her hand, and they fled through the gloom. Behind was clamor, uproar, pandemonium. Overhead, sticks and stones whizzed and whirled. Grand Junction was enjoying its first dramatic revolt.

"I don't want to be an actress," whimpered Minnie Belle, clinging close to the professor. "I don't want to be like Nordica. I want to go back to Uncle Dunc and Aunt Cassie."

The professor squeezed her hand. "Don't you fret, Miss Minnie," he soothed. "You can go back first thing in the morning. Everybody can't be Nordica these days. Everybody can't be Booth and Barrett. You'll be happy with Uncle Dunc and the cows."

They reached the hotel, to find Dode Simmons, furious, rabid, profane.

"You're fired!" he blazed before they stepped upon the porch. "And the girl, too! You planned this business to cure her stage fever, Finney. I've got a notion to punch your thick old head!"

The professor halted, blinking in the flame of the manager's eyes. "Fired?" he repeated plaintively. "Me fired—your musical director—the only E-flat in the troupe—the only *Othello* you've got! You don't mean that, Mr. Simmons? I didn't mean to start any riot—I just wanted to save the girl from a game she's not fitted for. Why, I'm broke—I'm getting old."

"Yes, and you're gettin' fired!" raged Simmons. "Get out of my sight—you and your second Nordica!"

Next morning, before the Thompson-Hacketts were astir, Professor Finney and Minnie Belle took a side street to the railway station. As there was no one to look on, they walked hand in hand. The professor had a ten-dollar bill in his pocket, and in a rusty grip he carried the splendid apparel of *Othello*. As they came in sight of the station, Minnie Belle sighed and smiled.

"I'm glad you fixed that up last night," she confided. "I'm glad I'm not going to be like Nordica. I'd rather live back in Happy Hollow."

"You'll be mighty happy back there with the buttercups and the pumpkins," said the professor, rather sadly.

At the station he spent nine dollars and fifty cents for the tickets to Cobville. The remaining fifty cents he placed in his pocket to finance his new start in life.

Minnie Belle, observing the action, looked at him anxiously. "But what are you going to do, professor—now that you've lost your position?"

"I—I don't know just yet, little girl," he parried. "You see, I have a little money."

Minnie Belle, with the wisdom of woman, read the secret of the lone half dollar. "If you haven't anything else to do right now, you could help Uncle Dunc look after the farm. He needs somebody, and we'd all be mighty glad to have you."

The professor beamed a childlike smile. "I'd like to the best in the world. It ain't just in my line, but I could learn—and—and I could see you once in a while."

The train whistled for the station. Minnie Belle returned the professor's slight hand pressure.

"Home!" she whispered. "Good, old home!"

# Come Play With Me

By Grace Mac Gowan Cooke

Author of "The Joy Bringer," "The Power and the Glory," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

## SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.\*

Into the office of young Stockbridge, successful broker and manager of the Morningside Land Company, of Watauga, Tennessee, comes Lyria Faïne, a young widow, very shabby in attire, but with a face and nature like spring sunshine. She has been a youthful playmate of Stockbridge's, but they have not met for many years. She comes with an extravagant plan for the development of her town of Queensborough along the lines used by Stockbridge in his own city, and enlists his aid. He is charmed with her, and a business partnership is lightly formed, Lyria having a small sum of money to invest. Her broad sympathies, quaint unworldliness, and childlike gayety make of every one she meets a friend. Stockbridge quite forgets the fact that he is engaged to be married to Miss Louise Barringer. Living at the humble boarding house of Mrs. Martha Traynor—known to all as Aunt Marth—Lyria quickly becomes a sharer in the joys and sorrows of the boarders there. Among them are Aunt Marth's granddaughter, Susy Lucy, "Miss Clara," a dressmaker, with a little lame brother; the Staleys, and Japson, an old steamboat captain with a French horn. After Lyria has loaned to these various friends the entire sum of money she had planned to invest in real estate, she goes to Stockbridge with the announcement that she must therefore withdraw from the Queensborough partnership. Irritated and annoyed, he lets her go, and she seeks employment elsewhere. Almeric Baghot, a young Englishman, and grantson of Cyrus Munson, chief stockholder in the Morningside Land Company, arrives, and Stockbridge initiates him into the business. He takes him, with the Reverend Hilary Brand, to lunch at the Commercial Restaurant. The waitress who comes to serve them is Lyria Faïne.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A TIP.

FOR a moment Stockbridge lived up to that jaw of his and those browbeating eyes; he could have whirled aloft the chair he grasped and struck her. What mountebank business was this? What play-acting nonsense had the little fool gone into?

Brand acknowledged acquaintance with her by a slight bend of the head; he was too well-bred to err on either side in this matter. She smiled at them inclusively.

She meant well with that smile, but

it was not a waitress' smile. It expressed too much; it accepted too much. Stockbridge met it with a frown, and his greeting, as he sat down, was a sort of growl. When the men were in their places, she stood respectfully by, having placed a menu before each and added a pencil and pad for Stockbridge, whom she understood to be the host. One would have guessed, to look at her, that she was pleased with herself, that she thought she was doing nicely!

Stockbridge was so concerned with her iniquities that he could scarcely see to write his order, that he found diffi-

\*The first installment of this story appeared in the June number of SMITH'S.

culty in asking his guests as to their preferences. She brought the soup and placed it.

He saw the glance of interest and approval that Baghot gave her. He was disgusted with the clear friendliness of the gaze with which Lyria met it. For the rest of the meal he was merely waiting until he might get rid of the other men and speak his mind to Lyria.

"Unusual-looking girl, our waitress—what?" Baghot commented during one of her absences. Something about Lyria seemed to have brought him out of his indifference and given him an almost blithe air. "Hard to imagine how a peach like that"—jerking a little backward nod toward the swinging door through which Lyria had departed with her tray—"came down to wait on table. She looks more like a lady than most duchesses."

Stockbridge glowered. Brand forebore any explanation. Lyria came back to serve them with her cheerful air of good will, infusing into the relation somehow a humanness that seemed more and more to reach young Almeric and make him joyous. The broker had hard work not to hurry faster through his meal.

A serious-minded man, a person of substance and standing, he certainly could not approve of Lyria Faine. Her looks of innocent beguilement, directed toward other men, the wooing of her voice when she spoke to Brand or Baghot—these displeased him more than anything he remembered to have met before in all his life.

Had the woman no sense of proportion? She used the same gushing sentimentality toward all comers. Just the exact show of feeling that used to spill over in regard to the Queensborough partnership, he realized now, must have gone forth with the money she had lent old Japson of the tootling horn, with the bangles she had given gum-chewing

Susy Lucy. The smile and the eyes that disturbed his august circulation beamed equally on the just Brand and the unjust Baghot, on Aunt Marth and the one-eyed cat. Nobody could be really interested in such a person—even in a friendly way; but he acknowledged a disposition to make her behave herself.

Stockbridge was so stuffed with objective knowledge, with the wisdom whereby man subdues his world and puts it under his heel, that he was stiff with it. Yet he had no more idea of the danger of making Lyria behave herself than an infant would have of that incurred by buttering its bread with nitroglycerin.

The talk at the table went on without him. Brand knew some of Baghot's father's people in England, was distantly connected with them, indeed, and the two were conversing of the old country. Their host watched grimly to see when they would finish their meal. Also, he had time, between bites as it were, to survey the room and keep a sharp eye on Lyria. Her plain, black sateen with its nunlike white collar and cuffs became her. The small, snowy cap nestled knowingly on her dark hair; her cheeks were pink; her eyes like stars. She was plainly enjoying herself, as pleased as a hostess giving a big dinner to guests whom she chose to wait upon.

A ruddy-haired, thick-necked man with glasses, who had nodded to Stockbridge as they came in and received an austere greeting from the financier, seemed particularly to offend by his observation of her. Stockbridge stirred in his chair whenever she passed close to this man's table. Near its edge were piled some papers—documents in legal-looking envelopes—which he was glancing over while he waited for his lunch. As Lyria went by once—not, Stockbridge was sure, touching them—these came to the floor with a flutter.

Being on the alert, Stockbridge could have sworn that the ruddy-haired man had pushed these off to get Lyria to pick them up. If this were so, the ruse was successful. The broker regarded with contemptuous pity the face of concern she turned to the disaster as she set down her tray and went back to help. Poor, foolish creature, flattered by any man's admiration! He discovered in himself, without surprise, the remains of a disinterested friendship for her, the feeling of one who had known her in a blameless childhood and wished to act toward her as a relative might.

His disposition to shut out other aspirants for her favor did not trouble him; it figured in his mind as an intention to protect her. Whatever thing he undertook was apt to include the besting of some one. He had been overreaching his fellow creatures ever since he put on trousers—while he was yet in pinafores; his sole idea upon approving a thing was to corner its market. He was of the breed that would have burned half the wheat harvest to raise the price of the other half, or cast back into the sea two-thirds of the catch that he might wring a greater profit from the fish market. Yet so handy does the clever financier become with his conscience that he was able to believe himself quite disinterested in his regard for Lyria Faine.

The meal came to an end at last, Baghot lingering insufferably over his demi-tasse and cigarette. The three men went out together, Stockbridge having twice decided on the chastisement of a tip, and twice caught himself back from offering what he regarded as an unnecessary affront. He made an excuse and returned for a glove left purposely on the table. Lyria saw him coming down the room, paused in her work of clearing and brushing, and looked up at him, smiling adorably.

"Were you surprised?" she asked be-

fore he could speak. "You forgot to give me any tip."

Stockbridge's fingers were in his pocket before he realized that she had innocently broken his weapons before they were tried against her. He brought forth a bill and tossed it contemptuously on the table.

"Oh, that's too much," laughed Lyria. "I just reminded you because I knew you wouldn't want to forget it."

"See here," he arraigned her, "what does this mean? Are you playing waitress for an April-fool joke?"

They had this end of the dining room to themselves, but Lyria glanced uneasily in the direction of the cashier's desk and then toward the farther door, where an amply fashioned form, smooth, wooden, a ship's figurehead, announced the head waitress. She lowered her tone as a hint to him.

"Oh, no, indeed," she said. "I told you I was out of money. I had to do something. I'm not well enough educated to teach; I'm an awful botch at sewing. The management here needed waitresses so bad that they were ready to take on green hands. It pays very well—with the tips." Again she smiled at him sweetly. "It isn't often I get ten dollars, but a good many gentlemen give me as much as a dollar. I'm doing fine."

"It's outrageous!" he exploded. "The idea of your being thrown with this class of people, estimated as one of them!"

"Oh, there are some mighty nice girls here," Lyria interrupted, "and others that would be just as nice if they only knew how. They need help. I love to help folks."

A young female with an aggressive red pompadour and a sliding smile passed them slowly, giving Lyria the benefit of a portentous wink. Her eye dwelt on the crumpled bill which still lay on the table. Lyria drew it toward her, smoothed it with tender fingers,





smiling right into Stockbridge's eyes the while, and tucked it into her belt. Her lips soundlessly shaped another "Thank you."

"Who's your swell mash?" Stockbridge heard the hissing whisper. Lyria flushed a little. "Watch out for her nibs." And the red pompadour nodded slightly toward the ship's figurehead.

"Thank you, Willy," Lyria said and turned definitely to the dismissal of Stockbridge. "That's Willy Hicks. She means the head waitress. They don't allow us to talk to patrons. I'm afraid you'll have to go."

"Well, I've got to see you and get this business stopped," Stockbridge made the assertion aggressively. He had not thought of it when he began to talk to her, but it seemed to him now that it was what he had come back for. "Where can I see you? When? I'll not come here again, and I'll not go to that infernal boarding house, either."

He had visions of old Japson rising to reproach him—accompanied by the French horn.

"We're through at eight o'clock," Lyria told him hastily. She accepted his assumption of authority as women do accept such things. "Please go now. I'll see you then—or Sunday—Please go."

The head waitress was moving toward them, looking at space.

He went. The afternoon got past him in a curious fashion. He didn't admit to himself that he was deeply interested in Lyria Faine. He admitted nothing. He treated his own soul as he would have treated a court of justice, trying hard to baffle it—to throw dust in its eyes and get it to thinking of something else.

He stuck doggedly to the point that he was going to see Lyria that night and settle things. He had hardly formulated what he would say to her, but he refused in advance to be sympathetic

because she had chosen, in her silly way, to go to work in a restaurant. He'd not play the sentimental, nor give her a false impression that her performance mattered a great deal to him. Just good plain common sense was what that young woman needed and what he'd serve out to her. Of course, he didn't mean to be harsh—she was only foolish, not really bad—but she had to have plain talk, and she'd get it from him.

Having cooled down a bit, he would have been glad to go back to the Commercial for his dinner, since that would have put the coming interview on a more reasonable basis; but he had said that he would not.

Something moved him to phone Brand. The curate's work was part of the parish of St. Luke's, and Stockbridge had no difficulty in finding him and getting him back to the office that afternoon. The Canadian, however, insisted upon talking a great deal about the sanitary situation at the Gloriana Mills.

"I tell you, Stockbridge, you've no idea of the conditions out there. Go and look for yourself. It's a matter of life and death. You could start a run of typhoid among those women and children—and I know you too well to think you're willing to be responsible."

This imputing of noble motives to the broker grated a bit—from Brand.

"A run of typhoid would be expensive, anyhow," Stockbridge said dryly. "I promise you I'll go out and look into the matter—though I may find it impossible to swing the other directors."

At the close of the interview he still found himself unable to bring up the question of Lyria, and the Reverend Hilary was leaving the office when he himself mentioned it.

"Seemed rather odd to find Mrs. Faine waiting at table at the Commer-

cial, didn't it?" he inquired conversationally.

Stockbridge had the knob of the opened door in his hand, and he shut it suddenly.

"It seemed disgusting," he returned, with a promptitude and a violence that surprised the other.

"I suppose it is unsuitable work for her," Brand agreed, with maddening moderation. "She carries it off perfectly, though, and it's no more unfit than things I've seen men do—things I've had to do myself when I was hard up. Isn't our attitude toward women earning a living somewhat irrational?"

Stockbridge put this by with a shrug. "I wish you'd speak to her—advise her to go back to Queensborough," he said like a man ordering an errand done.

"Back to Queensborough—why should I?" inquired the curate blankly. "I don't think she ought—under any circumstances. She's a woman that needs a broad field——"

"And she'll find it waiting on table in the Commercial Restaurant," supplied Stockbridge with dry sarcasm.

"Why not?" Brand stuck to his colors. "She's an unusual woman. She'll always have to do things in an unusual way. But people follow her readily, and I look to see her accomplish good wherever she is."

This, as Stockbridge recognized, was from the preacher's point of view. The rebellious heart in his bosom—so much of it yet remained true to the boyish Mark Antony—trumpeted to rise and follow Lyria even now. The sense of division made him incautiously blunt and direct.

"If she's got any friends in Watauga," he said, "they ought to get her out of such a place."

"Oh, she's got friends enough," the curate smiled. "She's got a cloud of 'em down at the boarding house and all over the river end of town; but I don't know that they're likely to be

of any use to her. They love her tremendously—and borrow every cent she's got. She attracts unfortunates as a candle flame draws moths."

"There ought to be some relative—some one in the connection anyhow—that could take charge of her," maintained Stockbridge obstinately. "Mrs. Vertrees, Senator Vertrees' wife, used to know the Adenes very well; she'll be back from the Springs next week, and I'm going to her about it."

Again Brand smiled.

"No doubt she and Mrs. Faine will like being brought together," he agreed, "but there's a power of selfhood in that little woman. She intends to live her life—just as you and I intend to live ours. She knows what she wants and goes to it very simply."

"She thinks she knows what she wants," amended Stockbridge grimly. "Look what it gets her into! I call to-day's performance pretty nearly disgraceful."

Brand's worn face showed a trace of his whimsical, one-sided smile.

"Lyria Faine doesn't care any more for what you call disgrace—the loss of social caste—than the great Exemplar she follows," he said. "You know He forgathered with thieves and prostitutes, and His friends worried a good deal about it."

"Yes," said Stockbridge dryly. He felt that the curate was talking shop and resented the bringing of it into this discussion. "So you think she'd be saving souls by carrying plates for men like Dana Slawson? I suppose you noticed him when we were at lunch. His eyes followed her from the time she came into the room."

"Was Slawson in the restaurant while we were lunching?" inquired Brand rather ineptly. "Ah, of course, he has his offices here in the building, the same as yours. He'd be likely to lunch up there."

"Yes—and worse men," added Stockbridge. "If there are any worse."

"Oh, there are a good many worse men than Slawson," asserted the curate. "I could tell you things about his liberality in a charitable way that might surprise you."

"Anything good you told me about Dana Slawson would surprise me," agreed the broker dryly.

"Well, I wouldn't worry about Mrs. Faine, Stockbridge," the other went on comfortably. "She'll come to no harm from association with people like Slawson—or any other people that I ever saw. There's an unsoilable innocence about women of her sort that would carry them through anything in safety."

"Huh!" grunted Stockbridge. "I'm not worrying myself to any great extent. But I knew her people"—he failed to state that his acquaintance had never gone farther than that gate in the back fence—"and I knew her as a child. I don't choose to see her disgracing herself and them. A man's restaurant! What the devil does get into some women? I suppose you read the evidence that Slawson's wife got her divorce on?"

"That's so. I hadn't thought of that," said Brand meditatively. "He is divorced. If he were attracted to Mrs. Faine, it might mean something serious."

"Oh, Lord!" the broker ejaculated. "I beg your pardon, Brand, but the idea of Slawson in such a connection—Though of course if she degrades herself by working in a man's restaurant as a waitress, a fellow like Slawson might feel he could approach her."

"I don't think anybody's going to make a mistake about Mrs. Faine because she's working in a restaurant," Brand maintained with unusual decision. "They might about some woman just as good—but not about her."

Stockbridge looked bored and opened

the door again, but he popped it smartly shut as the curate went on:

"I've been almost amused at your extreme interest in her, Stockbridge, but I see the root of it. She got you just as she gets all the rest of us—by seeing the better part and failing to recognize the evil. I suppose she said to you that you were a noble man doing a great work for humanity in your real-estate business. I see she did." And he laughed in Stockbridge's dismayed face until the features set in their usual impassiveness.

Altogether, his interview with the curate was irritating. Brand, in his preacherly way, seemed to be like the rest of the masculine world—inclined to give too much importance to Lyria Faine and her doings. Stockbridge was annoyed at the realization that he himself thought too much about them, yet it was impossible to get away from the shocking occurrence. The restaurant being on the top floor of the Commercial Building and his office suite on the sixth, he was inevitably reminded of the matter every time he went out into the hall to take the elevator. Men going up and down had a most annoying way of figuring themselves to him as going toward Lyria or coming from her. Again he felt that his nerves were at fault—and Stockbridge never before in his healthy life had had to set up nerves. However, the thing began to look like a fight, and as fight circulated in his blood, was the breath of his nostrils, it laid strong hold upon him.

Twice he saw Dana Slawson, and fancied a smirk on his nearsighted countenance. Just before these meetings he had taken himself to task for the folly of playing chaperon to a fool woman who was certainly old enough to take care of herself, but if Slawson deserved a drubbing in the premises he, Stockbridge, was more than ready to administer it. The attitude of the notoriously virtuous man toward the char-

tered libertine might assure his enlistment. Yet the thing must not be allowed to cut too much figure.

He came back after dinner and waited in his office, making an excuse of some work, elaborately deceiving even the janitress who was cleaning up, and found himself issuing from the arched entrance just at the time the waitresses would be leaving the restaurant by the doorway that was allotted to them.

There was a spatter of April rain. The pavements were all wet and shining. Several people hung about the side entrance with umbrellas or wraps, evidently to take the girls home. One man, too much in shadow for Stockbridge to be sure of him, yet looked extremely familiar, as much of him as could be seen below an opened umbrella. Stockbridge twitched at the collar of his raincoat, and glanced impatiently up and down the sidewalk; and at that moment the girls began to emerge. He walked on a little way in the direction he knew Lyria must take and faced about with the design of meeting her. She was coming toward him. He caught the trim outlines of her figure in the glow of light around the doorway of the Commercial Building; he saw the shine of her eyes raised to somebody who walked beside her. Then she passed him, walking under Almeric Baghot's umbrella, passed so close that he might have touched her—and never saw him!

He was too deafened by his own emotions to hear, as he well might have done, that Lyria was definitely, though kindly, rejecting the boy's proffered escort, too blinded by stupid rage to wait and see that at the corner Baghot put her on a street car, and stood, as it moved, lifting his hat as to any other lady.

With an inarticulate murmur of sound, he wheeled and made for the entrance of the building. He had passed through the hallway and gone up the

half dozen flights to his own floor before he remembered the elevator. He unlocked his offices, went in, switched on the lights, flung up the lid of his desk, jerked out a heap of neglected work, and plunged into it as one who had been exposed to contagion might plunge into a cleansing bath. He labored in his own tremendous fashion until morning.

Quaintly enough, the first undertaking that engaged him was the making sure, by correspondence with stockholders of his faction, that Almeric Baghot be given the trusteeship of the Morningside Land Company. He had always meant to knock out his Eastern stockholders when their methods became a drag on his swift, powerful pace. If this knocking out included the disgracing of Baghot, it would, in his present mood, be welcome.

Stockbridge's comforts were as crimson as his courage. He loved to lift the hide from a business adversary, peg it to his own chariot wheels, and go on in a rich spatter of gore.

According to the private report he had, Baghot was not to be trusted with money. He would force the trust upon him, make the sums temptingly big—and Baghot's gods might look after the rest.

The glimpse he had had of Lyria Faine's skyey wideness of outlook, the memory of Baghot's characterization of her as a "peach," the thought of them walking side by side when he had warned her of his own intentions to speak to her after hours that night, made the undertaking richly purple.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SCRAMBLED EGGS.

For a night Stockbridge might bar out thought of Lyria with work, toiling like a man who builds a stone wall, who sweats to roll great boulders into place and heave them to their station.

Then, when it was done, and he straightened up with a sigh in the gray of dawn and knew that he must get home to his rooms at the Patton for a bath and a shave and the undesired breakfast, must make ready to face the daylight world once more—Lyria came through his stone wall and laughed at him.

"And did you think to be quit of me so?" she seemed to say. "Why did you toil? Every stone you rolled into place was a promise for the future that you can never forget me, that you can never keep me out, that you can never give me up."

Stockbridge's intelligence, which was excellent for the uses to which he had so far put it, rejected this vision, but the nerves of his body, the blood in his veins, recognized it, and trembled to a magic older than time—the necromancy that moves on the face of the void and bids forth worlds.

"I'm tired," said his intelligence within him. "It's weariness that makes me remember a thing I have decided to forget. A bath and a shave and a good breakfast will set me right."

He stretched his big arms and yawned with that inarticulate half roar of the bored lion in the face of the little people who stare at him. Shaking off Lyria as the lion might shake off some petty constraint, he took his hat and gloves and let himself out of the office.

The scrubwomen were in the hallways; he stumbled over one kneeling at his door and apologized without seeing her. Lyria would, before the elevator arrived, have known the color of her eyes, if not the number of children she was supporting by her cleaning work.

But why the devil did he have to think of that? What was it to him that Lyria Faine was a bigger fool than most folks? Again he shook her off, stepping out into the sleeping streets of the city, in which the blue mountain

air still lingered like a dear, daylight ghost. But she caught up with him on the empty sidewalk and moved beside him. Herself he could be brutal with, short with; but the wraith of her defied his clumsy barrings out and turnings from, its little feet kept pace with his as he stepped, its voice was ever in his ears.

Halfway down the block he met the red-headed waitress walking with the girl who had waited on Slawson's table. Both regarded him self-consciously and giggled. Looking straight ahead, he could see all of their performances he wanted to—and a little more. As he passed, he heard one say to the other, "That's him," and caught the words "millionaire" and "mash." The breakfast that waited for him at the Patton appeared less appetizing for this encounter.

It was more than two weeks before Stockbridge allowed himself to go up to the Commercial as usual for his lunch. During this time, he had been content with a certain espionage of Lyria's conduct. He waited at night near the building to see that she got safely started home; that, he told himself, was only humane. He noted with disfavor that she spoke to the policeman on the beat—not as a policeman, but as a human being. This went so much against him that he broke through his rule.

He went up to the restaurant early. His virtue fairly pained him. His intentions were as clean as a newly washed slate. He felt himself worthy the head of the class. The room was filling rapidly. Lyria was hurrying about her table serving a quartet of men, to whom he instantly denied any good qualities obvious or hidden.

The head waitress came down the room, intent on piloting him to a place; her eye met his, was held for a moment, and her gaze wavered to the ground. She divined a kindred spirit



and sheered off, leaving him to draw a chair morosely toward a pillar and sit there until Lyria's table was available.

It was the red-headed waitress who called attention to him and put the other girls up to passing close and supplementing stares with words. He did not look easy, yet a man who gave ten-dollar tips was worth trying for. He may not have heard them, but he began to feel that he was wearing the dunce cap—he who had come to be monitor. When the men at last were gone from Lyria's table, he was at hand to take it instantly, and he brought his temper with him. She received him with a beaming smile.

"Well—I thought I never was going to see you again," she said genially. "I've noticed you on the street in the evenings, but you never came close enough to speak. What's the matter? I thought you always took your lunch up here?"

"I used to," said Stockbridge in so ominous a tone that she should have known at once what was wrong. Perhaps she did.

"Well, I hope my being here hasn't anything to do with your staying away," she said sweetly. "Of course I'm making a lot of new friends, but I never forget the old."

He had by this time lost the form of his intended exordium. Lyria put the menu before him and hospitably urged dishes upon him in the manner of a country hostess. He ordered scrambled eggs, and asked her when she was going to quit this foolishness.

"As soon as I can get something better, I suppose," she said, with some reluctance. "And it seems a pity, too. The first week, standing so much and carrying the heavy tray nearly killed me. Aunt Marth had to bathe my feet every night in salt water, but I'm getting used to it, and I'm doing splendidly. It seems a pity not to stay on a while."

Stockbridge looked at her. Was she,

congenitally and by upbringing, incapable of understanding the simplest social laws that make some things correct and others impossible? He decided to go back to the A B C of the matter and take up her statement in regard to the number of new friends she was making. This would lead up to the question of her putting herself on an equality with a common policeman. That was a thing that he certainly could discuss with her. He'd give her an opinion of that which would make her sit up and think.

"Now, see here, Lyria." He used her name for the first time, having contented himself during the halcyon days of the Queensborough partnership with the jesting "Cleopatra." "See here," he repeated, his tone as crisp as that of a married husband facing a grocery bill, "I'll say nothing against your being a waitress in a restaurant if you choose to pretend that you like it, but talking about making friends in such a place is beneath you. I see you every evening chatting with the policeman on this beat."

He evidently expected that she would be floored by that. She looked at him meditatively and nodded. In her world policemen were rather imposing individuals, blameless, set above others, living benevolently to help ladies and children across crowded streets and to march gloriously in civic parades; yet she seemed finally to come around to some comprehension of what Stockbridge meant.

"He got me a place in the street car the night of the traveling men's banquet," she said. "We had such a rush up here that night that we were all run off our feet. Of course, it was lovely—such a lot of nice people from all over the country—but it was awfully hard work. I don't know what I should have done if Mr. Reagan hadn't got me that seat in the car, for I wasn't fit to stand up or walk home. Of course, he's a good man or he wouldn't be a police-



"I never knowed a fiddler yit that warn't a liar," said Aunt Marth uncompromisingly. "Captain Japson's a very good man," suggested Lyria.

man. You speak to him, don't you? Why shouldn't I?"

Stockbridge tried for a moment to formulate the objectionable difference between Lyria's way of speaking to Reagan and the manner in which policemen should be addressed. It was beyond him.

"A policeman is a servant," he said at last doggedly. "Do you think you ought to walk along the street talking to a servant?"

Lyria laughed out softly at this.

"You're sitting in the Commercial Restaurant talking to a waitress, right now," she jeered.

There it was—the thing that he could neither get over nor around; Lyria was a waitress in a restaurant—and not ashamed of it.

"Can't you see the point?" he asked testily.

"I can see that you've been mad at me for over two weeks," she said, as she set down his scrambled eggs. "When I got this place in the Commercial, I was almost certain that you lunched here regularly and I thought I'd see you every day."

"Was it worth while taking a place like this to see me?" inquired Stockbridge sarcastically.

"Oh, I'll get something better to do as soon as I can," she told him serenely. "I know it isn't considered suitable work for our sort of folks, but it's interesting, and I get paid very well, I find."

"You find," echoed Stockbridge beligerently.

"Yes," explained Lyria, "the tips. The salary isn't much—it's only six dollars a week, unless I'm willing to work Sundays, but the tips run up splendidly."

"The tips?" Stockbridge seemed unable to get away from parroting her words.

"Yes, tips—and other things."

He looked so wild that she amplified

her statement, still without any air of extenuating or apologizing.

"I don't mean things like the ten dollars you gave me. I regarded that as just a gift from a friend—but so many have got interested in the mission work at the river and out at Cottonville, and while the money doesn't come to me, of course, it's just as good. I've been able to do things I never had any hopes of. I'm going to start a bank account pretty soon."

"Hm—well! Your bank account won't amount to much unless you reform your ideas in regard to lending—or your friends get over the borrowing habit—or some of them pay you. That last's not likely to happen, though."

"Oh, yes," Lyria assured him. "The Staleys are going to pay me back right away."

"I take it that Mr. Staley has secured employment," commented Stockbridge.

"I got him a place as conductor on the electric line that runs out to Cottonville," Lyria returned. "They're going to set aside so much every week out of his wages—more than I think they ought to—until the debt's paid."

"You got him a place?" echoed Stockbridge, when Lyria had been through the swinging doors and returned with his dessert.

"I did," said Lyria proudly. "You see the general manager of the interurban takes lunch here—Mr. Banxton. There he is now," and she nodded pleasantly to a gray-haired individual across the room. "He's a very pleasant gentleman. Whenever he's at my table, he talks to me about the employees and such things, and I just mentioned Bolly to him and how honest he was—because they do have trouble with their conductors taking money sometimes."

"Bolly?"

Stockbridge uttered the two syllables in a hopeless tone.

"Oh—Mr. Staley," Lyria corrected herself. "His name's Bolivar. I get

into the habit of calling him the nickname that everybody does at home."

Across the room Banxton had signaled to Lyria, evidently with a desire to speak to her. Presumably it had something to do with Bolivar and his position, but Stockbridge pushed his napkin back on the table and got up suddenly.

"Go right over there and talk to the man," he said. "Don't let me detain you. I don't want any coffee."

Banxton was a widower.

Stockbridge left the restaurant feeling that he still wore the dunce cap. He was not used to that, nor was he used to giving up. The next day saw him again in the Commercial at lunch time, and his coming there inaugurated a curious, unacknowledged duel between himself and Almeric Baghot. Sometimes one got Lyria's table and managed a bit of talk with her before the other arrived, but as it would accommodate four, more often they lunched in company with each other and two strangers. Everybody got to noticing it. The dining room was a-titter over the situation. Only Lyria maintained any appearance of supposing the thing was reasonable.

Seeing her so continually in the presence of other people, Stockbridge gradually tried her strength so far as he was concerned. It consisted in her influence. He was rich in money, but Lyria would always be inexhaustibly wealthy in those more incorporeal things that money is supposed to—and cannot—buy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A SPIELER.

In this setting Lyria bloomed and bloomed. The prosperity that she herself was creating, the admiration that followed her—cheap if you like, but she was not one to make distinctions—formed an atmosphere in which she

could put forth new graces and beauties. She was standing up well under her work—after the first shock of it—being sound and strong, country-bred, after all, and having drawn health from her nearness to nature, her instant acceptance of the moment's joy. Her work obliged her to keep different hours from those that she had before, and she got more intimately acquainted with the laundry girls and with some from a manufacturing bakery, whose days were spent in packing crackers and small cakes into cartons. These, with transients in the way of steamboat hands and railroad men, made up the early-breakfast table.

A half-grown boy who worked in a livery stable two blocks up the street usually walked the two blocks with her. He was shy, awkward, half sick, and inexpressibly lonesome, but when he heard she was from Queensborough, and had got a chance to tell her that his mother's folks came from there and that he had a second-cousin living three miles out on the Emory, it seemed to help considerably. Thereafter, whenever she was in sight, his eyes followed her, and there was in their gaze the helpless good will of a stray dog.

She won the heart of a young fellow in the furniture factory who had left wife and babies in the mountains and who showed her their photographs over the fried potatoes and bacon of a candlelight breakfast, reaching them out with one hand while the other went toward his lunch bucket, in haste to be gone before the whistle should blow, the queerest mixture of tenderness and anxiety in his face.

This made up somewhat for Miss Clara's being disappointed in her and saying so. The seamstress had offered to get her a place at learning the trade, and had been told that the little woman hardly knew which end of a needle went first.

"I s'pose she thinks she'll ketch an-

other rich beau in that there rust-rant. Well, she'll not!" Miss Clara said sourly. "Chances like that don't come twict. She's got to remember that she ain't so awfully young any more, an' I never did call her rightly pretty. I *like* her looks, but pretty she ain't."

"She favors a gal I usedta—" came Japson's formula. "That thar gal was a leetle taller—'bout six inches er so, an' red-headed; but Lyrie minds me of her somehow, all the time. Oog!—Oog!—*Ooh!*"

The concluding phrase was not an expression of grief, but the outspoken comment of the French horn.

Aunt Marth was thriftily keeping chickens in a vacant lot near by, where the billboard of somebody's variety show stared down at her. Large-eyed, large-limbed, rosy-cheeked, languishing ladies, open believers in the doctrine of a short skirt and a merry one, they regarded her pullets, her broods, and her biddies glassily.

Lyria, cutting across from the back of the house one morning, coming on spendthrift foot through the dewy crab-grass that took all the polish off her shoes, was stopped by the old woman and appealed to in the matter of Susy Lucy.

"I know gals has to have their love affairs unbeknownst to the old folks," she said, voicing the code of her people; "but this here's a feller she see'd at the movin'-picture show."

"Yes," said Lyria doubtfully. She was a devotee of the entertainment mentioned; did Aunt Marth mean to condemn it?

"Ever'body's talkin' to me 'bout it," the old woman went on. "Miz Staley see'd 'em together an' offered that Bol Staley'd hunt up 'bout him, but I didn't like to ast it of a man person. Ye know how they aire—git 'em into a thing, an' ye cain't git 'em out."

"What makes you uneasy, Aunt

Marth?" asked Lyria gently. "Susy Lucy's old enough to have a lover."

"Ye-ah," agreed the old woman. "I was wedded an' had my first child befo' I's Suse Luce's age. That ain't what's pesterin' me. Hit's the feller. Some way I don't like what I hear of him."

"What do you hear?" asked Lyria.

"Waal, 'mongst other things, he plays the pi-anner in that thar movin'-picture place—an' I know in my soul that no good could come of such as that."

"A musician? Why, that's a noble calling," demurred Lyria.

"I never knowed a fiddler yit that warn't a liar," said Aunt Marth uncompromisingly. "Mostly they run away with other folks' wives—or beat their own."

"Captain Japson's a very good man," suggested Lyria.

"Aw—horn-blowin' may take 'em diff'runt," Aunt Marth admitted. "I reckon hit does. Jap's the only horn-blowin' person I ever knowed—close to—an' he don't to say make enough music to hurt his sofl, anyway."

They stood together under the flushed sky of morning, anxious-faced, concerned for the office girl, who resented their interest, as both of them knew. A wandering air, as yet unheated, unpoluted, came down the street, touched the gray hair on Aunt Marth's worn temples, and ruffled the dusk edges of Lyria's love-locks. The clucking, quarreling chickens fluttered and struggled over the food about their feet; the brief-skirted ladies gave them merry scorn. Aunt Marth, her yellow bowl almost empty, turned and looked toward the side door.

"Thar goes the child now. What's she leavin' the house so airy fer? She don't hafta be at the office fer nigh onto an hour yit. Run on, honey, an' ketch up with her an' name this to her. She'll take from you what she won't from ary nother person livin'."



Lyria ran on, caught Susy Lucy halfway up the block, and spoke.

"Huh!" said the girl. "Ef I went by you an' granny, I'd never make a mash."

"Why don't you bring him to the house and let her get acquainted with him?" asked Lyria. "She'd be sure to like him, and then it would be all right."

"I cain't," said Susy Lucy briefly. Then, as Lyria asked no more questions, she burst out: "Ef I fetched him round, granny'd find out somepin 'bout him that she'd kick on."

"She's heard he's a musician," ventured Lyria. "I think she doesn't like that; but it's only because she doesn't know him, I'm sure. See how much she thinks of Captain Japson."

Susy Lucy looked obstinately away.

"They's somepin else. Folks nowadays thinks different from what they did when granny was young. She says she never heard of a divorst tell she was over forty years old."

"But she's heard of them now," urged Lyria reasonably. "If that's it, she wouldn't hold it against him. Didn't you notice how kindly she spoke of Mr. Slawson the other day when Mrs. Staley got out all those pieces she cut from the paper and was showing them to us—"

"Yes, I know," broke in Susy Lucy, "but Slawson's got his divorst—"

"And your lover hasn't—"

Susy Lucy looked as if she could have bitten her tongue out for its inadvantage. In silence the two girls walked along up the uneven brick sidewalk, steep where the road climbed from the river, with the empty morning street on one side and vacant lots on the other. They were nearing the livery stable. The boy who worked there went past them slowly, looking resentfully at Susy Lucy, who had displaced him. Lyria, glancing at her after he had got past, was surprised to see that,

chin tucked in, eyes down, the girl was struggling with tears.

"Why, Susy—do you care so much?" she whispered.

"Now if you go an' tell granny about him havin' a wife—" came the wail.

"I won't," interrupted Lyria.

"He gits ten dollars a week, sometimes, when he has work," the choked voice went on. "She used to spend ever' cent of it—put it on 'er back, or give it to 'er folks—an' they've got a-plenty. If I ever git the handlin' of it, I'll show him how far ten dollars a week kin go."

Lyria sighed as she looked into the hard little face, all broken up and swimming with emotion, its tartar eyes suffused with tears, alight with the woman passion of sacrifice, the readiness to be brayed in a mortar to make her man's weekly wage go further. Somewhere in the blood of the sex must come down that tradition of the Bible wife whose price was above rubies. It is a man-set standard, but an instinct deep in woman fetches her panting up to make good the bargain.

They had come to the corner where their ways parted. Lyria stopped wistfully, feeling that she had not yet accomplished much.

"I'm glad I spoke to you about it, anyhow," she said mildly. "If you'll talk to me, maybe I can help you."

"I won't hear a word agin' him," said Suze Luce with an abatement of hostility. "He's a-goin' to git rid of her as soon's he kin. I wouldn't give him up for anythin' you or granny could say."

"I'm not asking you to give him up," said Lyria as they parted. The Lyria kind of people hardly ever do urge folks to give things up; theirs is the faith that things can be made right, which, after all, is rather a delicate compliment to the Creator.

She went on, somewhat pensive, but not shocked or alienated. It is to be

feared that she had not the touchstone that is traditionally supposed to be in the heart of every pure woman. Willy Hicks had been her special favorite among the waitresses at the Commercial; the daring, the impudence, of the red-headed girl appealed immensely to her.

Very early in their acquaintance Lyria had been told the secret of a mysterious "gent" to whom Willy was secretly wedded. Secret marriages had obtained considerably in the literature Lyria had read, and there they had always worked well. She had accepted Willy's statement that this party had married her and gone immediately West to a vague destination, exacting a promise that she should retain her maiden name and work in the Commercial Restaurant until he could send for her.

Lately poor Willy had taken to speaking of him more frequently and to others beside Lyria, such mention being accompanied now by a drawn smile and followed by fits of black depression. Lyria had worried about her. The head waitress had regarded her queerly, and last Saturday she had been without reason dropped from the force.

This morning, somehow, the woes of life came in a tide, as if some mistakenly merciful hand had dammed them up for a time and then forgotten the chance philanthropy. They flooded in on Lyria as questions. Why should not Susy Lucy have her lover in peace? It seemed that all she wanted was the chance for generous giving. Why did people take exception to the manner of Willy Hicks' marriage and discharge her?

As Lyria was putting on cap and apron in the little room set apart for such use, the ship's figurehead swam to its threshold, gathered way, crossed, and came in, shutting the door after her with cautious decision.

"I want a word with you, Miz Faine," she said not unkindly.

"Yes?" Lyria quavered. Misfortune was in the air.

"It's about them two gents you've got goin' here in the resterant."

"Two—gents?" echoed Lyria faintly.

"Well, I don't deny that you've got more'n two," admitted the head waitress—which was generous, considering that she was also a woman. "The others seem to stand it better, but the managemnt has asked me to speak to you about them two."

Lyria did not ask which two gents were specified; she knew.

"What—what do you want me to do about it?" she inquired, all the sorrows of unprotected womanhood shining in her tears.

"Now, see here—you're a perfeck lady," the figurehead sympathized. "Maybe if you wasn't so much of a lady, you'd know better'n to let 'em get goin' that way in the dinin' room. Keep such things out of the dinin' room. That's all the managemnt asks."

Lyria was cast down. It seemed she could not take care of herself very much better than Willy Hicks or Susy Lucy. But five minutes of depression was about the limit with her, and by lunch time she was ready to speak to whichever of her "gents" should come first to the table.

It chanced to be Stockbridge. She began her statement in the middle, as Lyria generally did, and tumbled the whole thing out on him, mixed with Susy Lucy at one end and Willy Hicks at the other; hurrying because Baghot had stopped at the cashier's desk a moment and would be coming down the room to take his place opposite the broker.

"What's that?" inquired Stockbridge angrily. "You don't want to wait on me at table? You'd rather I didn't come to the restaurant? Well, what do you think—?"

Lyria glanced up and found Baghot approaching.

"I'm afraid I'll lose my job if you—act this way," she whispered hurriedly.

Stockbridge had that to digest with his meal—and it went decidedly against him.

Lyria looked so white and fagged when she got home that night that Aunt Marth was sure the work at the Commercial was telling on her. The flies were terrible at the boarding house, a continual torment by day, an eerie humming on the ceiling at night, if you lit your lamp. The rickety screens were no protection. You felt that the imprisoned insects were enraged at their detention, and that the roar you heard was the mob spirit rising in them. The fly papers were always full, and yet it seemed to make no diminution in the hordes. The only respite was a street-car ride or a trip to one of the amusement parks.

"Let's all go out to Eden, come Sunday," said Aunt Marth, when they could no longer sit in the comparatively cool side yard and must go upstairs to the stifling bedrooms.

Now was it fate or chance or Providence that brought alongside the electric car, going slowly down the hill to the railway crossing, an all-too-familiar motor containing Stockbridge, Baghot, and a young lady? Lyria's party was on the car. She had insisted on taking Attie of the brace along, because Miss Clara had a sick headache, and the child seemed liable to make an end of her. Then there was Susy Lucy, old Japson—looking strangely lopped without his French horn—and Aunt Marth.

"Who's that with Mr. Stockbridge?" demanded the old woman jealously.

"That feller's treasurer of the Morningside Land Company," offered Susy Lucy, partially emerging for the first time from an excessive sullenness with which she had endured the preparations and setting forth. "He's way up in G. His grandfather owns Wall Street, New

York City. Do you know him? He's a-tippin' his hat to you, Miz Faine."

Baghot saw her first, then Stockbridge. Even Bob glanced up from the driving wheel, and acknowledged her smile with a sudden flash of ivory, a swift finger at his cap brim. Car and auto kept almost even down the grade. The lady in the machine—handsome, clad in impeccable motor garb—vouchsafed the perspiring, beaming vulgarians in the humbler car a passing glance of little interest. Lyria's face at the window; flushed, smiling, her waving hand, seemed to be passed over with the rest.

Human pride is a curious thing. To the gods, beholding from above, presumably it all looks flat, as things do seen from a balloon. The haughty lady in the motor regarded the people in the electric car as dust beneath her chariot wheels. Yet one of them, Lyria—sitting at the window, Attie squirming on her lap, his bony little forefinger pointed persistently at Stockbridge's eye, while his cambric-needle voice made question—had her reasons for being quite as much puffed up.

One of these reasons was that they were riding in Bolivar Staley's car—a proof of what she could do when she set out to get a man a job. Also, there was cash in her pocket, of her own earning, with which she meant to add to the outing treats that Aunt Marth had not dreamed of when she proposed it. The old woman's extravagance never went beyond the five-cent admission to the grounds and a frugal ice-cream cone, everybody paying for himself. Lyria intended to take them all for a ride in the miniature steamboat that had lately been put on a pond in the park.

It seemed to her that Stockbridge answered her greeting rather stiffly—Attie's pointing finger and shrill outcries may have had something to do with that—but she forgot it in noting young Baghot's movements.



"Listen," said Lyria. "We're trying to get a spieler's job for Captain Japson. You can recommend him to this gentleman, can't you?"

A short train was going by, and motor and car had stopped for it. Lyria saw the young fellow get out, just as the train whirled past and the electric car went on. At the gates of Eden, he caught up with them, laughing.

The motor, by order of its master, turned without crossing the tracks at all and climbed the hill again. Stockbridge hustled his fiancée home in his

usual high-handed fashion, with some excuse of a forgotten business engagement. Miss Barringer belonged to the company of wise virgins who reserve discipline for post-nuptial use. She went, not meekly, but smilingly, with the indifference of a wax figure being shifted from one show window to another. In fifteen minutes Stockbridge was at the railway crossing again.

The park was rather a squalid place, fit for the outings of the lowly, making its one claim to exclusiveness by being "For White People Only." Somewhere inside, a band was playing very bad music very badly.

The broker, paying his nickel at the gate, saw a small, excited crowd blocking the way ahead of him—Lyria, with Attie attached, Aunt Marth, old Japson, Susy Lucy, and Baghot, all talking at once, and addressing a short, wide, red-faced man, who seemed to be feebly holding out against some proposition of Lyria's.

Beyond her was the shifting crowd; a Ferris wheel revolved. It was hot—hot—hot in Eden. Children moved languidly, instead of running and shouting. The constricted place held a good-sized pond, a grand stand, a track, and a baseball diamond. It was already crowded, and, like the flies at Aunt Marth's boarding house, the people inside seemed a little indignant, as if they half believed that it was cooler beyond the tall, whitewashed board fence.

Only Lyria, of all the creatures in sight, appeared to be perfectly pleased. She had pushed back her hat—I am afraid it was a little on one side—her cloudy dark hair was most beautifully untidy, her eyes glowed, and her cheeks were pink. She caught sight of Stockbridge.

"Oh, here's Mr. Stockbridge," she cried, and ran toward him, laid hold of his arm, and dragged him into the argument that held her small group together.

The wide, red-faced man looked up at him and grinned sheepishly. Stockbridge's picture had been in the paper too many times for any one in Watauga to mistake "The Midas of Morning-side," "The Copper Cresus." Such a headliner cannot go about incognito.

"Listen," said Lyria, like a girl on a school playground counting out for a game. "We're trying to get a spieler's job for Captain Japson. You can rec-

ommend him to this gentleman, can't you? You know about his being a steamboat captain on the Tennessee River for thirty years and playing the French horn."

Japson eyed the newcomer a moment and looked down. Stockbridge knew considerably more than that about him. The showman, half under in the matter of Lyria's fascinations and trying not to drown, appealed to hard business sense and financial comprehension in the person of the broker.

"I'd like to oblige a lady," he said; "but I've got another feller on my hands for the job. What'm I goin' to say to him?"

The voice of the "other feller" came across to them from the shores of the pond. He was a slim youth with an abnormal Adam's apple, which moved up and down eerily as he spied.

"Here y'are for the trip on th' *Tennessee Belle*—minnycher steamboat," he yelled through his megaphone. "Carry sick pass'ger! Make-er-roun' ver lake—three mints—stop watch. One dime—ten cents!"

"Get them parties to move on, Barney," admonished the ticket taker. "You-all blockin' the way."

They went—higgledy-piggledy, hanging together in an irregular formation, still vociferating; and Stockbridge went with them.

"Captain Japson could tell stories about real steamboating," Lyria insisted.

"N' he can play a bigger horn'n that," keened Attie.

"We don't want a spieler to tell stories," objected the red-faced man helplessly. "We want him to get folks to pay ten cents to ride on the minnycher steamboat."

"Well, here's your man, then," Baghot interposed. His hat was on the back of his head, his hands tucked in his pockets, his pugnacious young face all alight. Stockbridge had never seen



him look like that. "You put our man in a blue uniform," he urged, "and pin about a pint of medals on his chest, and tell how many times he's been blown up in his own steamboat, and it'll draw like fun—see?"

Lyria looked a little doubtful at this, but the red-faced man caught at the idea eagerly.

"Say, that ain't so bad, either," he agreed, as Baghot and Lyria, dragging Captain Japson, and followed by Susy Lucy and Aunt Marth, her fan anxiously pressed to her bosom, went swiftly past them. "That feller's got a head on him—and the little lady, too."

He turned to Stockbridge as his only remaining auditor and winked. The broker could have killed him for that wink.

"Ain't she the goods?" he crowed; "a born mixer—— A reel lady, though," he added, as he saw how ill his encomiums were received.

Without having said yea or nay, quite as we move in dreams, Stockbridge found himself on the edge of the pond, with the megaphone man, his miniature steamboat filled and started on its trip, protesting almost tearfully to Lyria that he was ready to stand by a former statement, evidently made to her a few moments gone, and lay down the horn in favor of any one who would take it up.

"Well—say we make the change, an' then your man kicks about our makin' out that he's been blown up in a steamboat?" debated authority.

"I've been blown up—twicet," said old Japson solemnly.

"I reckon that's the reason he don't mind that thar horn," muttered Aunt Marth, but nobody marked her.

"Y'have?" ejaculated the red-faced man in astonishment. "Well, wouldn't that jar ye?"

"Hit did—considerable," agreed Japson.

The showman walked around him, getting his points, letting the new idea

soak in. Lyria offered a word now and again as to his authenticity, and assured Attie in an undertone that they were going to ride in the little boat just as soon as they got the new job for Captain Japson. Baghot had out a pencil and paper and was sketching a medal, chuckling the while. Everybody—but Stockbridge—was happy. Lyria was as much at ease as if she had been chatting with a party of her Queensborough neighbors on the way home from church; yet there was nothing in her familiarity that bred contempt.

Stockbridge, angry as he was at the whole performance, could find little fault with the manner of the men toward her—except that they were men. Any one else would have studied the situation with interest. They were all treating her as they would have treated a sweetheart, putting best foot foremost, furbishing any attractions they had, being the more men, as she smiled upon them. Which is to say that she seemed to represent to each the eternal feminine, whose response is inevitable.

The party of the first part was plainly looking about him for something to justify a sentimental folly on whose verge he rocked. He wanted to be able to say, when calamity followed: "It was fate." The spieler wearily took up his horn.

"Gitcher seats fer the *Tennessee Belle*," he intoned.

"Hit war the name o' my fust boat," Japson told them.

"Now—listen to that!" cried Lyria.

"Well, I wisht I may never!" exclaimed Aunt Marth. "So it war!"

"I reckon that does settle it," said the red-faced man. And they went into details as to Japson's hours and wages.

Stockbridge got around close to Lyria's shoulder and spoke to her in a peremptory undertone.

"You want to get out of this," he said. "I'll take you home in my car."

"You'll have to wait," returned

Lyria. "We can't go for quite a while. Captain Japson's got to watch the work and see just what's to be done, and we'll have to coach him. Besides, I've promised Attie a ride on the boat. You can stay and help if you want to, and then we'll all ride back with you, if you like."

Stockbridge looked at the passengers Lyria would have thrust upon him, glanced at his watch, and said that he must be going.

"I want to see you to-morrow evening," he told Lyria's departing back.

"You never answered a word when Mr. Stockbridge spoke to you that last time," Aunt Marth reproved her.

"Didn't I?" said the little woman, turning uncertainly. "Oh, well—he'll understand. He's a business man himself."

## CHAPTER IX.

"YES."

Lyria's belief that Stockbridge would "understand" was justified, but whether he did so because he was a business man, or in spite of that fact, is open to debate.

The next evening, as she was leaving her work, she found him waiting for her. He asked no questions, gave, indeed, no greeting, but hurried her across the sidewalk to his car. The night was slippy and warm and sweetish, like a wilted flower.

"It seems good to be riding with you again," Lyria sighed, climbing into the tonneau.

Yellow Bob, the dignity of nations yet to be heavy on him, relaxed a bit and smiled at her.

"It's ve'y wahn, in the city—for ladies," he admitted cryptically. "Which way, Mistah Stockbridge?"

"I want a chance to talk to you," Stockbridge informed his passenger. "Shall I have Bob go down Elm to Main and turn to the river?"

It was the route to the boarding house, and Lyria looked a little troubled.

"We—we wouldn't have much chance down there," she said. "It's so hot that everybody's out in the halls or in the yard, and my room's like an oven till after ten o'clock."

"Of course," said Stockbridge. He winced away from the idea of what that home of Lyria's was like, from the thought of talking to her in her poor little room; but nothing could head him off now. "Run out Ridgeway Road to the links," he gave Bob the order.

The city streets were weary, tepid, only beginning to cool from the moist heat of the day. The hissing arc lights, the flaring trolleys, seemed intolerable. People lagged along the sidewalks.

Lyria drew in a great breath of relief and delight as they wheeled into the straight gray road that led to the heights and a breeze met them with a scent of tree blossoms on its wings. It was a lovers' night, with a little young moon up in heaven, half drowned in a flowing tide of silver-gray mist. Her happiness welled into speech.

"I'm so glad you're not mad at me this evening," she murmured. "Sometimes, when you haven't said a word of the sort, I know just as well that you're thinking hard of me. It makes me feel bad."

"Does it?" inquired Stockbridge. "You've been acting of late as if you didn't care what I thought. You've done everything on earth I didn't want you to, and refused anything I did want."

Here was the place, in Stockbridge's experience of women, for Lyria to say that she was sorry, that she was anxious to please him if he'd tell her how. What she did say was:

"Well, if you feel that way, I think it was awfully good of you to come and take me out in your car for a ride. But you *are* good. Isn't it sweet to-

night? Oh, I wish everybody were out riding in an automobile!"

She hadn't made the right answer, but Stockbridge looked at her in the dimness and his heart melted. She smiled back at him confidently:

"Mrs. Staley's baby isn't nearly so well." She gave the information as of importance. "This is its second summer, and I'm afraid it's going to go hard with it. I wish the poor little thing and its mother were with us now. A ride like this would do it all the good in the world."

Stockbridge denied himself the rapture of Mrs. Staley's company, and even excused the baby with fortitude, but he did not resent their mention; he found himself slipping back into the old position with Lyria. The painful things he had meant to say to her—what were they? Memory of them dimmed in the dearthness of having her once more beside him; it was washed away in her sweetness.

He was used to his own magic which could say: "Let there be money"—and there was money; but the wonder dawned on him of Lyria, who had only to say: "Let there be joy"—and there was joy. Once more he found the place where she was a little heaven, the air about her a magic solvent of all bitterness. He looked at the hand lying on her knee and would have reached down to clasp it but for Bob's presence in the front seat. He sat silent and let her talk, babbling of her life there in the restaurant, of the sorrows and cares of others; never of any troubles of her own, of any hardships she had endured.

"I'm worried about Willy Hicks," she told him. "She's lost her place, poor child. She's married—in the most mysterious way. It's somebody that's gone West, and she won't even tell his name, but he's going to send for her pretty soon. I hope he does. Some of them don't believe she's married at all. That's why she lost her place."

"She's fortunate to have lost it," said Stockbridge. "You look tired to death. Such work's enough to kill a woman."

"Yes," hesitated Lyria, "I'm tired tonight, but that's mainly because it's been so hot this week. You're wasting a lot of good sympathy, feeling sorry for me. I never was so happy in my life as I've been since I worked in the Commercial."

Stockbridge glanced in Bob's direction. He hoped the noise of the motor had drowned Lyria's words. He hated to have a servant hear her say that.

"My work's so interesting," she went on with increasing enthusiasm. "I told you it was a little hard at first, but I'm a lot stronger than I look, and I keep meeting so many nice, kind people, and everybody's so good to me——"

"Who?"

Stockbridge uttered the monosyllable unwillingly and therefore loudly. After it was out, he looked again at Bob's back and wished he had not asked.

"Why—everybody," Lyria responded. "All the girls come to me with their troubles—love affairs mostly." She dropped into pensiveness a moment. "Love troubles seem to be the main thing with young girls, and they're glad to have a sympathetic older woman to talk to about them."

An older woman! Stockbridge surveyed her and chuckled a little derisively. She didn't pay any attention, but went happily on:

"I meet so many new people in the restaurant. I do love that! People are the most interesting things in the world to me. I'd like to be a letter carrier, or any of those things that take you from house to house and give you a chance to see how other folks live—a glimpse of their joys and sorrows—wouldn't you?"

Stockbridge sighed. The movement heaved his big shoulders, and he raised that bulldog chin of his as one who casts off a leash.

"Yes—oh, yes—certainly," he agreed in perfunctory tones. "I wasn't thinking so much about the new people you meet as of some that you're thrown with pretty frequently. It won't do you any harm, I suppose, to listen to the stories of those girls, but——"

"You mean Mr. Baghot," said Lyria. "I feel sorry for that poor boy. His mother's dead and he's spent the last few years with his father's people in England. I don't think they understand him very well. You know he wants to fly—in a flying machine, I mean. He explained all about it to me—it isn't a bit like a balloon. A biplane, he called it. I expect going up in one is really very dangerous, but it's a noble ambition. I wish his grandfather would agree to it. I'm trying to get him to ask the old gentleman again."

"Well, you'll have to postpone your missionary labors so far as Almeric Baghot's concerned," said Stockbridge grimly. "I'm going to send him to Chicago on business for the Morningside Land Company to-morrow. He'll be so busy packing and getting off that he won't have time to lunch at the Commercial, either."

"Don't you like him?" inquired Lyria with her usual directness. "I've been so interested in what he tells me of his father's people in England and his grandfather's wonderful home on Long Island. I'm afraid he was pretty wild, and they've sent him down here to try to make a man of him."

"To get rid of him," growled Stockbridge. "The East's always unloading such fellows on us. Lyria—if he comes back, I don't want you to—— Never mind, we'll settle it another way. Come!"

Bob, by Stockbridge's instructions, had drawn up the car at the deserted gateway of an inclosure around a little artificial lake at the foot of the heights. The broker opened the door and gave

Lyria his hand, and they left the auto to walk under the trees.

White drift from the wild-plum branches outside the fence showed faintly through the dusk. Locust flowers blurred the hills above with pallid bloom, spilling their sweetness abroad in the friendly air. There was a sappy, vegetal odor everywhere, a vehemence of life, belonging to the adolescent year. Violet velvet distances strung with great, palpitant, moving earth stars of electric light led off to the city, awakened to its false dawn of a million lamps.

The two came out alone on a wide graveled walk that surrounded the lake, and saw half the lights and all the shadows reflected in its depths. There was nobody in the park at this hour; they had it to themselves.

Stockbridge strode on a little ahead of Lyria, pulling her after him. He was in a mood that would not let him walk slowly. The thing had come upon him that had come upon his prototype a thousand years before and prompted to marriage by capture. But this was a thirst of the spirit, a longing that outflames any bodily drouth. Only the doing of a mad thing could assuage it. Who was ever known to be famished for the sane and proper? Prosaic, ordinary events that a banker, a statistician, an actuary, may figure out—can they enrapture? Oh, we know—we know—we know it is the thing denied that would give the crown to happiness! Through all creation runs this belief. The trees think, no doubt, that walking is it. The beasts, looking up, believe it may be found in flying. Man's long-time hallucination has been that it is somewhere in loving. Stockbridge, out there by the lake of shadow, a little new moon drowning in its depths, moving through a blind man's holiday, with Lyria's wrist clutched in his hand, felt at last that it would be in loving Lyria—a revised and improved Lyria, an expurgated and annotated Lyria, with his

marginal notes on her, retyped, rebound, on a somewhat different theme, in a much superior presentation. But these emendations would come later; to-night it was just Lyria, as she was, that he must have.

"Isn't it sweet here?" she whispered, but received no answer.

He was struggling to master that which had made him—after considerably making a world for him to exist in, suns to shine upon that world, a universe for all to swing through. Battling thus, he grasped at the familiar platitudes of life—mention of their last meeting and her enterprise.

"Did you get the place for the old fool?" he asked abruptly.

"Captain Japson?" said Lyria, recognizing him promptly from this suave description. "Yes, we got the place for him. You helped splendidly. I haven't had a chance to thank you before. He'll do well in it; but we have to be careful, because his pension's a dependent pension, and they'd take it away from him if they knew he was earning wages. I think it's fair for us to be—careful—about it—don't you?"

"Yes—yes," agreed Stockbridge absently. "Anything's fair that'll help him to pay you."

"Oh, he isn't expecting to pay me out of that. I've got a half interest in anything we make from the lawsuit, and Mr. Slawson says—"

"Dana Slawson," interrupted Stockbridge, halting abruptly that he might scan her face. "You've been talking to Dana Slawson?"

"He's the lawyer that Captain Japson hired with part of my fifteen hundred dollars. We've gone over the entire case together, and he agrees with my ideas. You see, Captain Japson never would compromise, but I say that those people that bought the copper mines have got wives and children, too, and you've got to think about them. Mr. Slawson agrees with me."

"Oh, he does! Have you gone to his office?"

Stockbridge made the inquiry in a hopeless tone.

"Of course I've gone to his office," returned Lyria tranquilly. "Captain Japson won't have it any other way but that I'm to be a full partner in whatever we make out of the Swanton Mines. I'm the one that got him to have Mr. Slawson for his lawyer. I see a good deal of the people that lunch at the Commercial, and I have always had the feeling about that man that whatever he undertook he'd be successful with." Her voice rippled a bit with laughter as if the current of it had run across the old man's clumsy objection. "Captain Japson said that Dana Slawson was born a rascal and he'll die one—but I know better."

"Japson's right for once in his life," said Stockbridge gruffly. "See here, Lyria, that man Slawson isn't a fit person for you to know. If I should tell you about—"

"You mean the scandal that was in the papers when his wife got her divorce a year ago?" supplied Lyria. "Mrs. Staley saved all the clippings of that. She brought them to me right away as soon as she knew we were employing him. It made me awfully sorry for him. Poor soul! If he was as much to blame as they seemed to think, you know he must be feeling dreadfully now; for he's really a fine man."

"Promise me you won't go to his office again." Stockbridge made his demand doggedly.

"Why, how could I promise that, when he's our lawyer? Besides, it isn't as if I were an inexperienced girl. Even supposing Mr. Slawson to be a bad man—and I don't think he is—how could he hurt me?"

"What are you but an inexperienced girl, ready to take the word of any rascal that comes along?" demanded



Stockbridge roughly; but there was real concern in his voice to Lyria's ear.

"Oh, you couldn't call me inexperienced," she demurred. "I'm a widow, you know, though it never seems real to me—and I'm awfully old. I feel older than you. Sometimes it seems to me that I'm getting cynical."

Stockbridge was too desperately preoccupied to find anything funny in that.

"Promise me you'll never go to Dana Slawson's office again," he repeated. "The man isn't fit for you to associate with."

"I might do him lots of good."

"Did he suggest that you might?"

"How did you guess that?"

"I didn't guess—I knew. That's always the tune of a filthy beast like Slawson. I suppose Bag-hot talks the same way—and old Japson borrows your money—and everybody at that infernal boarding house imposes on you. Lyria—Lyria, don't you see I can't stand it?"

Again Stockbridge came to a halt. He dropped her wrist. He stood head down, his clenched fists at his sides. To him the whole world—masculine—was in a conspiracy to take Lyria away from him. For the moment these figured not as fellow men, but as wolves. He was backed against the wall, fighting for possession of her—and she was a waitress in a restaurant! There was only one way out.

"Dear," he began, "I can't let you go



*"Am I fit to go in in this old dress?" she asked, hanging back.*

on with it. You don't know what horrible people you're making friends of. You've no more idea than a little child of the hideous things that are in the world. I can't let you."

Lyria responded to affection as the earth responds to the sun. She faced him, flushed, shining.

"It's fine of you to care so much," she whispered.

"Care—my God!" breathed Stockbridge.

"Oh, I know you're good; but it seems wonderful to have you thinking for me and troubling yourself about me. It's awfully sweet of you."

"You don't know——" said Stockbridge thickly. "I can't sleep. I can't eat. I'm no good for anything. Lyria—Lyria!"

He gave way at last and made the best love that was in him at the time. It was not a first-class variety, having been stunted in its youth, and coming out clumsily and in chunks, but it pleased Lyria mightily. She was glorious with the joy of having a lover. All the romance she had absorbed in her lonely childhood from the old love letters that had taught her penmanship answered to him, thrilled to his somewhat choked and obscure ardors.

It didn't matter that he said a good deal about being a fool and showed that he was driven to his present utterance against his will; over and over, like a cry, a prayer, an incantation, came the three words: "I love you"—the biggest magic man has made yet, the spell that builds worlds, or, read backward, destroys suns and systems.

He drew her out into the moonlight and studied her face. He had got no answer in words, but her eyes saw things he could not, things that, reflected in their depths, bewitched him.

"Lyria—Lyria, don't you care at all?" he begged. "You've treated me as if you didn't."

She turned in the path and lifted her arms to him, putting up her lips to be kissed like a child. Stockbridge could have sobbed with relief.

"Oh, but you never said before that you loved me," she breathed. "Do you—do you? Do you really love me?"

She stopped right there, asking no further question, as pleased as a little girl with a new doll.

They stood under the blossoming

trees by the still water, and she leaned against his breast, shutting her eyes on the honeyed dusk of the spring night, contenting herself like a child with the bliss of the moment, all through her a vast pride in his strength, and an eager, very human, delight in his riches. Her mind began to dramatize the new life with Stockbridge, an existence of affluence and generosity. She loved him very much. It seemed to her that she had from the first.

"I thought you were going to be married to some one else," she said at last. "You told me so—didn't you?"

Stockbridge pulled himself together and took belated thought of the ornate Miss Barringer and the ornate nuptials now very close at hand.

"There are some arrangements I'll have to make," he admitted. "I didn't tell you before how I felt because I hadn't made those arrangements; but I couldn't let you go on with this infernal waitressing and running to any man's office and mixing up with all sorts of people that aren't fit for you to speak to. I had to have authority to protect you from that."

He seemed to be justifying his course—which needed no justification with Lyria.

"The girls'll hate to have me leave," she murmured.

"Well, if they've got tears to shed on the subject, they'd better prepare to shed them now," he laughed exultantly. "You've left."

"Have I?"

"You certainly have. We'll be busy to-morrow getting you something fit to wear." He touched the black-clad arm about his neck and pulled the small hand around against his lips. "You've got to have beautiful clothes and servants and your own car. I'm going to make you happy."

He overlooked the fact that Lyria was already happy. She forgot it, too.

"Oh—and then I could take out peo-

ple in it that wouldn't get a chance for a ride unless I did take them," Lyria cried. "I could make things so much easier for—lots of folks."

Stockbridge was not a generous man, but he was in the initial stage of a passion as deep, as strong, as relentless, as his own nature.

"I mean to give you everything you want," he said. "How soon could you be ready to be married?"

"To be married? Oh!"

She drew away from him as if the word had been a blow. He followed her up, holding fast to her, searching her face as they came out into the moonlight. She was a little white around the mouth like a sick child; in her turn she clung to his arm and answered his inquisitorial look with appealing glances.

"Certainly," he said. "You didn't think I meant anything else with my love-making—did you?"

The tone was harsh, menacing; at the bottom of his heart lay the profound, inveterate distrust of man for the alluring woman. He wrestled with a desire to wring from her confessions of all the love-making she had heard from those other men. What had they voiced of less creditable intentions that made her ready thus to misconstrue his?

"Oh, no—no—no!" Lyria was crying now. "You don't understand. I'm not very well. I'm awfully tired to-night. You don't understand."

Nothing was more certain than that Stockbridge did not understand. She had been willing to accept benefits at his hands—delighted, even, that he should offer them. Would she have taken pretty clothes and maintenance without marriage? She smiled at the proffer of one, and wept when he mentioned the other.

"Of course, we'll be married some time," she sighed miserably. "I—I hadn't thought of its being so very soon—that's all. Don't be cross, dear."

Stockbridge melted. His clumsy grabbings after the soul of Lyria had brought him so much—that she leaned on his breast and called him sweet names. He paused momentarily to take it, to proffer in return caresses and endearments. But this soon developed into further and futile shoutings across the gulf that lay between his world and hers, his clamorings upon her in a language she never could know. The ornate one, all the women of his world, were keen to put forward the price of love in decorous marriage. It seemed to him part of their womanly nature. He subconsciously demanded it of Lyria as something he must have in the woman he would make his wife. No gleam of the logic of the situation revealed to him what could really command his heart. He inevitably supposed that a revised and improved Lyria was the creature to do it.

She admitted that she intended to marry him. He demanded to know when.

They walked on the lake bank, and Lyria cried. She thought maybe a year.

Stockbridge beat her down from that to six months.

She begged for time to get used to the idea.

He urged with what he considered flattering loverlike ardor until she gave way and agreed to three months—two—one.

"Take me home," she gasped when this had been accomplished. And, a possessive arm about her waist, they walked back to the car.

She got tremulously into the auto like a prisoner entering the Black Maria. Stockbridge continued to embrace that which represented Lyria to him, but the soul of her cowered away, and somehow his soul knew that what he held to his breast was an empty seeming. The joy was gone out of the summer night; the little leaves up on the trees sighed only, instead of whispering; the water was

all darkling down under them; Lyria hid her face from him and wept.

Bob guided the car slowly under the sycamores by the little stream, and increased his speed as they reached the highway. He headed back to town. Stockbridge's arm felt Lyria trembling; he heard her breath catch now and again in something like a sob.

"Poor child! Did I drag you away from town before you'd had any dinner?" he murmured.

"It doesn't matter. I'm not hungry," she answered nervelessly.

He looked at her in the dimness, and his heart melted.

"Not hungry!" he echoed. "We're going right now to get you a good dinner. That's what you want. We'll dine together."

The small, relaxed hand that had so far lain supine in his turned in his clasp, its fingers curled up eagerly about his big ones, with a clutch that matched the gasp in which Lyria asked:

"Oh—might we?"

The great car, luxury on wheels, purred down the wide gray road, meeting or passing other cars that flashed long tracks of blinding light ahead and showed winking jewels of red light behind. Stockbridge considered the town three miles away, throbbing, glowing with heat. He looked back. On the heights there was the country club. He was its vice president. At this season everybody hapless enough to be left in town fled to some such place when evening came.

"Would you like to try the club this evening?" he asked.

"Oh," responded Lyria with an indescribable circumflex of rapture, "would you take me there? Could you? I've been past so many times, and it looks so interesting; but, of course, I've never had a chance to go inside."

Gloom scurried before the sunburst of this gorgeous idea; care was flung to the four winds. Stockbridge smiled.

"The country club," he said to Bob, leaning forward to give the order, and then settling back to smile again at Lyria, who had both hands at her impossible hat, dragging it off. "We can get a pretty good meal up there," he informed her moderately.

"It'll be the first time we've ever had dinner together," she cried. "It'll be our engagement dinner."

"Our engagement dinner." He echoed the banal phrase and liked it— from Lyria. "I ought to have phoned them a special order. We should have had flowers for our table. Well—such things will come afterward. You'll soon be giving lunches at the place, and be asked to be patroness of its entertainments."

In the dimness, Lyria brought her hands together with an inarticulate sound. He could see her eyes shining.

"How perfectly lovely that will be!" she breathed.

"Don't you see, dear"—Stockbridge argued the question very tenderly—"that's only a little part of what I can give my wife? Wasn't it foolish to put off our marriage?"

"I expect it was," said Lyria mildly.

"You're happy now—and I'm happy. You care about that, don't you, Lyria?"

"Oh, of course," she agreed. Lyria was so much taken up with making the whole world happy that it hadn't occurred to her as yet to specialize on Stockbridge.

"You can," he assured her. "You can make me the happiest man in the world."

"You'll want me to go right back in business with you, of course," she suggested innocently.

"Not exactly," said the broker, with a fond smile. "You'll have your end of the firm's enterprises, but it'll be social and domestic, and I'll finance it. You won't have to think of anything about money now."

"I don't know how much talent I've

got for that sort of thing," she said honestly.

"I've planned it all out," he told her. "To-morrow morning I'll come down to the boarding house, and we'll go over the scheme for our campaign together. My wife must take her position in my town."

He had it all planned out. He always had. He never left Heaven discretion in the matter of sending him blessings. He put in a list, as it were.

The machine was climbing the ridge now and going a little slowly, but more noisily, so that it masked their discussion of the grandeur of her new position. This felicitous subject lasted until they reached the wide entrance of the club. By that time they were laughing together like a couple of children, and Stockbridge stole a surreptitious kiss as he lifted her from the motor. They ran up the steps hand in hand. The magnificence of the place somewhat sobered Lyria; she was instantly anxious about her clothes.

"Am I fit to go in in this old dress?" she asked, hanging back.

They stopped in the shadow of a column. Music came out to them; lights spread a flickering carpet along the way to the broad doors. Stockbridge took the opportunity to put a reassuring arm about her. He was not a born lover, and perhaps the highest example of the article is born, not made, yet it began to seem that Lyria could do a good deal with him in that direction. From his urgent whisper there in the shadows it appeared that she was not only the most adorable woman in the world, but the most beautiful as well, and that whatever she wore became her.

"But you said you were going to get me some pretty clothes to-morrow," she reminded him. "Perhaps we'd better wait."

He found her naïveté delightful. He assured her roundly that she would be so much the loveliest girl in the room that nobody could notice her dress. She glowed and smiled at his words until they came near making good their own prophecy. The impulse of them carried the pair into the wide hall.

Music was sounding from the room beyond. Those light feet of Lyria's were ready to dance to any measure. Her head was up, her eyes shining. She was as willing to make friends with Stockbridge's world of opulence as if it had been peopled with beggars.

And he was taking her right into that world. Scorning the prudence that would have suggested a small table on the more retired and dimly lighted balcony, he made straight for the entrance of the big dining room. Here were the people among whom he meant to place his wife. It would be a struggle, but nobody ever accused Stockbridge of shirking a fight.

"Oh, goody, goody!" breathed Lyria. "I'm so glad you asked me!"

Whether she thus celebrated his invitation to dinner, or alluded to the question he had put earlier in the evening, did not appear. Stockbridge had no wish to ask. Lyria as she was would do for to-night.

The music, the lights, the crowd—these were to him the vision. Lyria, and Lyria's way of looking at things, were the reality. She had him, for the moment, with her in the oasis of her squared circle. Perhaps she hadn't quite got out of his spiritual lungs the sandy facts of life, but just now he was breathing the airs she always breathed and his values were her values.

He came suddenly to earth at the sight of Louise Barringer sitting at a table quite across the room, fixing eyes of astonishment on Lyria.





## The Fullness of Life

By A. Marshall

ARE any of the expressions current in the world to-day more variously defined, more undefined, more misused, more abused, than "a full life"? It is the ideal of numerous young women—to say nothing of middle-aged women and elderly women—who have not paused in their pursuit of it long enough to learn what it means; it is the proud possession—in their own minds—of numerous young men who haven't "laid hold upon life," as the old phrase goes, at all.

Not long since, the writer was in a supper company in which there was also a young playwright of the masculine gender, not by any means a star in the firmament of dramatic literature, but a sputtering Roman candle. He had a certain facility which he sold to a certain manager chiefly for the purpose of hastily revamping for home consumption ideas and situations successful in foreign plays; he was not too fastidious to refuse even to revamp ideas and situations in native successes when his employer thought it well to try to steal a little domestic thunder.

But at this supper the young playwright was feeling the gloom that comes to playwrights when the critics and the second and third-night audiences totally overthrow the apparent verdict of the friendly, applauding

first-night audiences. It happened, moreover, to be the fourth or fifth successive occasion on which these relentlessly indifferent creatures had interfered with the young man's satisfaction. And the manager was growing curt. The young man was very morose, but he gradually cheered, under the influence of food and drink, and he finally delivered himself thus:

"I don't understand it. Of course, the *Clarion* and the *Voice* and the *Bray* are all out to knife me. But why the public is cool—that passes me! Oh, well, never mind! If I don't seem to be making good—if I don't earn enough to keep the wolf from the door—why, let him in, that's all! And as he devours me, and I disappear down his throat in a dose of mercury bichloride or prussic acid or something, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I've lived a full life! There's mighty little in the way of human experience that I've missed, I can tell you that!"

And he added to the sum total of his human experience a Benedictine and brandy. And all the other young disciples of the "full-life" doctrine as practiced in this particular circle nodded approvingly and sympathetically.

It was an amazingly ignorant and pit-

iful boast for a comparatively intelligent young man to make. For among the human experiences he had missed were many that are daily enjoyed by Tony, the bootblack, at the corner, and Hermann, the dairyman, up the street, by Silas and Hiram following the plow and doing the evening chores on the farm and never once considering the subject of the full life. This young man had, perhaps, drunk wine from an actress' slipper, or done whatever other brilliantly daring and devilish thing may have supplanted that magnificent act; but he had never had the experience of establishing a home. He may have been intoxicated and rolled hilariously about town in a night-cruising taxi, but he had never seen his child held up to the window to "watch for father." He may, in his quest of experience, have smoked opium or hashish, but he never knew the exaltation, the humility, that come from feeling the happiness of another human soul dependent upon one.

There was something almost sacrilegious about hearing this inexperienced child prate of his knowledge of life, and the variety of his experience as a human being. It was like hearing a misguided creature who had feasted upon the scum of the pot boasting of the satisfying fullness and flavor of his meal. Think of it! A man who had never known the glory of a great success, the humbling power of honest, creative work, the nobility of sincere love and its responsibilities; a man who had never made a willing sacrifice for any immaterial good; who had never hungered and thirsted for the sake of an ideal—or any other sake; who had never gone cold or wet or weary; who had never marched to the music of drums beating for a great cause—think of such a one having the incomparable impudence to acclaim the sum of his experiences with pride, to glory in the richness of his life! And he is quoted

as one of thousands, all eager for the fullness of life and all ignorant of what constitutes it!

For it is a deep-seated delusion of the deliberate seekers after fullness of life that it is to be attained by strange routes, not by the paths of every day. And the more they reject of ordinary life, the more they seek the fantastic, the exotic, the more they flatter themselves upon the experience they are acquiring!

The women, young and not so young, who are feverish in their pursuit of the same thing are apt to fall into errors that, if they are not quite so glaring, quite so crude, as those of the young men represented by the despondent, though boastful, playwright, are yet quite as absurd.

"Look at Mrs. C.!" cries one of them, a young girl lately out of college. "Isn't she wonderful? What a rich life she leads—so full, so satisfying! She is head of the Fusion Women of our district, chairman of half a dozen committees on welfare work and civic reform. She is so good looking, too; and her husband adores her. And she has three perfectly darling children, and she reads all the new French and German books worth reading, and she swims, and rides horseback, and she has financed the White Goods' Girls' Own Shop— Oh, she's too wonderful for anything! I am so proud that I belong to an era when women amount to so much, when they may lead such full, rich, satisfying lives!"

"She's in the hospital just at present," replies cold Matter-of-fact. "The morning papers announce it—a nervous breakdown. And her adoring husband and her three children and the Fusion Women and the White Goods' Girls and the committees will have to struggle along without her for a while. However, they are used to that, all of them. She has had an annual collapse for the past three years."

The young enthusiast looks sad for a moment. Then she brightens.

"Well," she cries, "it's worth an annual breakdown, isn't it? Don't you think that there's a lot of truth in that poem of some one's, or that motto, or whatever it was—'a short life and a merry one'? Or was it 'a short life in the saddle, Lord; not long life by the fire'?" She wrinkles her forehead in the conscientious manner of a recently released student trying to verify a reference.

"My dear child," answers cold Matter-of-fact, "they are both excellent quotations, and either will answer your purpose. But Mrs. C., you observe, isn't living up to them exactly. She isn't having a short life in the saddle, but merely an interrupted one, on and off the saddle. She gets laid up for repairs about once a year—that is not the same as dying gloriously for whichever of the causes in which she is interested most needs a martyr—her adoring husband, her three children, her White Goods' Girls, or her Fusion ladies. It is merely putting upon each of these a burden difficult to bear, a burden that grows monotonous to bear when it is too often placed.

"You will find that they aren't bearing it gracefully—at least, the original bearers aren't. The executive board of the Fusion Women of your district are a fresh set this year; the directors of Mrs. C.'s various civic activities and of her philanthropies are constantly changing. The good women grow tired of suddenly finding themselves compelled to make a brilliant finish to the brilliant Mrs. C.'s plans, quite without her aid—so she has to get a new set of good women every year or so. Of course, her children can't get a new mother and her husband hasn't yet got a new wife. But all the outside elements of that wonderful richness in her life have to have handy substitutes for her."

"Do you mean to tell me her life

doesn't seem rich and full to you?" demands Enthusiasm peremptorily.

"Full? It seems slopping over!" cries Matter-of-fact. "That's what is the matter with it. That's what is the matter with a great many of these rich lives of women about which young girls like you grow so fervid. In her vanity or her quest for experience or her zeal for humanity or her determination to let no possible experience elude her—whatever the underlying motive—this woman and the women like her make a mistake as to the cubic content of their natures, so to speak."

"The cubic content of their natures?" gasps Enthusiasm, groping backward in her mind toward the mathematical lore once laboriously acquired.

"Yes—their capacity for experience, for work, for emotion—for whatever it may be. Now, it is perfectly possible to fill a shallow bowl, but it is not possible for it to contain the Atlantic Ocean or the Great Lakes or even the Mississippi River. The shallow bowl that attempts this impossibility immediately begins to spill over, and is by and by entirely submerged, lost, annihilated, by the flood that it has vaingloriously attempted to contain. It may have been a perfectly good little bowl, too, you understand—even a lovely little bowl, of fine metal, beautifully engraved, charmingly designed. But its cubic content was only so and so many quarts or gallons, and so it comes to grief. So it is with your Mrs. C., with my Mrs. D., with the next enthusiast's Mrs. E. They can enjoy the fullness of life to the limit of their capacity, and not an inch beyond that. As soon as they try to do more, they slop over."

"Slop over?" bleats Enthusiasm plaintively.

"Yes, slop over. They do it in various ways. Your overactive lady, not having been vouchsafed by Heaven the constitution of the rhinoceros and the endurance of the camel, collapses phys-

ically and nervously. Her retreat toward the hospital for repairs is splashed with the evidence of her inability to contain all the 'fullness of life' she has sought to corral. It's strewn with forgotten appointments, with tardy appearances at meetings, with irritability toward this unfortunate secretary and that unfortunate maid, with automobile collisions when she was trying to make up, by speeding, for the annoying fact that there are only twenty-four hours in the day; by headache here and sleeplessness there; by the children's impertinence on this occasion and the adoring husband's absence on an extended shooting trip on that. All sloppings over from that fullness of life for which your ideal hasn't got the cubic content."

"I suppose," remarks Enthusiasm bitterly, "that you mean to say she should do nothing but stay at home and warm her husband's slippers, or tell the children fairy stories and put arnica on their skinned knees. That she ought to have filled up the cubic content of her nature—a vile phrase, if you want my opinion!—with the mending basket and the afternoon tea table!"

"There certainly remain some women in this latter-day world of ours who will about exhaust their capacity for action in just such a program as that. It becomes disastrous when they refuse to abide by their own limitations—mind you, not when they attempt to broaden, widen, their limits, but when they attempt to act as if their limits were already widened. About your particular Mrs. C. of the many and resplendent activities, it is only to be said that, whatever her capacity may be, she proves that she has overestimated it when she takes to the hospital or drives her subordinates there. And she has overestimated it because of that popular fetish of the moment—the full life. If only people wouldn't be so constantly misled by the busy life and the feverish life! These are not necessarily the full

life or the rich one. Of course, they may be, provided always that the women living them have the capacity for all they undertake."

And so the debate between Enthusiasm and Matter-of-fact goes endlessly on, Enthusiasm forever seeing in the near-multitudinous activity of women the mark of the desired "richness" of existence, Matter-of-fact forever inclined to regard that activity as no richer than the treadmill.

Now, the disgruntled young playwright, boasting the variety of his life's experiences when he had thus far missed every really great and enriching experience of the normal man—to say nothing of the enriching experiences of the great, rare man—is not altogether unlike the average woman of to-day proclaiming that her existence is rich because it differs from the dull average in some way. To drink champagne from an actress' slipper, to invite the socialist orator from the street-corner soap box to tea or dinner—these may be amusing experiences for the youth and the maiden respectively enjoying them. To smoke hashish, to smash a store window in the cause of suffrage, may be deeds that the youth's father and the young woman's mother, respectively, never happened to do. But—an enrichment of life? Only if they and all the other deeds like unto them are absorbed, assimilated by whatever mysterious part of our nature may have the function of assimilating experiences.

These things, lending their thread of color to the fabric, must never be confused with the fabric itself. It is the man and the woman who accept the common lot—with its struggle, its failure, its success, its responsibility—who live the full life, who enjoy the rich experience. Responsibilities and the power to meet them—those two things constitute a full life, a rich life. Responsibility devoid of power is pitiful

tragedy, and power shorn of responsibility is tyranny and anarchy.

A few weeks ago there appeared in one of the leading Sunday papers of New York a long article, by a writer of national repute, describing the existence of the two women who, to her mind, led the most nearly ideal life of all of her acquaintance. And she then proceeded to give details of the life led by two well-known New York women who had had just one of the experiences common to the average woman—they both worked. They had never married, they had never known want, they had never lacked social position, friends, admiration, gayety. The one thing that redeemed their lives from an actual poverty of average experience was the fact that each had embraced a profession that she conducted with interest and success.

If either of them has done anything for the world, has sacrificed anything for an affection, for one of those intangible goods, those far-off, divine ends toward which the whole creation moves—why, she did it in such a way that the chronicler of these "ideal lives" did not think it worth mentioning.

Dozens—hundreds—of women, and especially of young girls, read the article; they saw photographs of the charming surroundings among which these two women lived; they read of their little dinners; of the dining room of their New York house, the garden of their French estate, the variety of their accomplishments, interests, and graceful cultivations. And these readers doubtless exclaimed: "Oh, what a rich life! What an ideal life!" They did no more than the author of the ar-

ticle, who, as an experienced woman, ought to have known better.

We have—or, at any rate, we like to think we have—passed the state where the possession of inanimate objects indicates richness of existence. But we have set up another standard hardly less pernicious. We no longer say: "How many houses or horses or motor cars or yachts or private railroad cars does she own?" But we say now: "How many interests has she? How many causes does she champion? How many charities does she help support? On how many committees does she sit?" And we fondly imagine, when we have added these "interests" together, that the sum makes a "rich life," a great variety of "human experiences." No more than, in the days of our cruder standards, the number of stocks and bonds, of jewel boxes, opera boxes, shooting boxes—the boxes of the rich are so many!—of victorias, motors, cottages, and butlers, made a rich life, a life full of human experience.

It is always the assimilation of experience, never the multiplicity of experiences, that counts toward the enrichment of existence. And it is always the normality, never the freakishness, of the experience that adds to the sum total. The young man boasting his pitiful, little knowledge of the sidetracks of existence, the gifted author celebrating the "preciousness" of her friends' lives as ideal, were both leagues from the truth. The only people who, when they come to die, may justly boast the depth and width of their lives are those who have missed none of the real experiences, which may all be summed up in labor, love, and responsibility.







# Grapes of Thorns

By Jennie Harris Oliver

ILLUSTRATED BY H. GUENTHER BREUL

OLD Garvin's daughter was more than picturesque in her rough garb—she was strikingly beautiful; but she did not know it. With envious eyes she watched the white young person in the white car who was signaling David Estwood to stop and hear a word from his home town. Overeagerly, it seemed to Rachel Garvin, Estwood obeyed, while she rode on, chin up.

Many women came to Borax Works, cool and exquisite in their snowy linens and soft, sheer lawns. Pictures they were of another world, vaguely real to this child of the desert. Jealousy had not before troubled her; but now, in sudden loathing of her bur-crusted khaki and laced boots, of the blouse that showed her throat uncompromisingly like a man's shirt, and the felt hat that flapped helmetlike from the sheen of her braided hair, old Garvin's daughter pushed past the white auto, out of the crowd and away.

In a few minutes Estwood followed at a good pace, but Rachel was too far in the lead for him to catch up, safeguarding the tears that sprang and shimmered and dried in the blue dusk of

her eyes. The young ranchman slowed down finally, hand loose on the rein, chin sunk in sober thought. The better part of this year in southern California he had spent fighting his desire for Rachel Garvin, daughter of the trickiest devil in the desert. Pride of race cautioned him; "do men gather grapes of thorns?"

There was all the future to answer for if he came up to her in this mood. Estwood smiled, remembering the starved scrap of a kitten she had rescued that evening from the torturing hand of a boy; how it now swung in the front of her blouse—witness to her tender heart. His smile became a chuckle as he recalled the ringing slap that had changed the torturer's impish delight into a howl of wrathful surprise. Rachel and the kitten were far ahead among the bristling shadows of Spanish dagger that stabbed an inky menace toward the early-rising moon. It was very lonely—there on the back trail!

Borax Works surges on the eastern rim of Death Valley, and Estwood's ranch—Bar-T—throws a well-irrigated shoulder still eastward into Echo Cañon



*Old Garvin's daughter pushed past the white auto, out of the crowd and away.*

and the foothills of the Telescopes. Old Garvin's place, beginning with a long, ramshackly bungalow and ending in a string of forsaken corrals, slumbers farther on, but Rachel reached home first.

In the Garvin kitchen, old Woonah, the Indian woman, stirred the embers under a savory rabbit pie as the girl came in, cuddling the lank little beast she had rescued in the crook of her arm.

"Woonah," she said, "I want some milk—warm milk."

The old brown face crinkled, watching the young mistress feed a wild-eyed

scrap of fur before satisfying her own healthy appetite.

"It's got a nice pink tongue, anyway," Woonah muttered, tucking the kitten away in the chimney corner, and Rachel laughed gratefully. The Indian woman was a comfort, making less poignant the remembrance of the girl in the car who had smiled up at Estwood.

Rachel ate her own supper absently, and then hurried along the covered passageway that linked the two dilapidated front halves of a once picturesque habitation.

An office with an immense table, which held some maps, minerals, acids,

and jars of earth, lay beyond the line of light that betrayed the door. Rachel stooped to the keyhole. There they were—her father and the usual visitor, smoking, a much creased map between them. Through blue clouds of smoke, Garvin's thick, upspringing hair, his fresh face, and long, pointed fingers came into prominence. The girl frowned at the figure slouched in a chair beside him. Pete Simms was always there, talking in the fat, cautious way she despised.

"The gold's there, Garvin," he was saying. "Fellow before Estwood thought it would be a snap locating it. I've heard him talk. He died, you remember. No telling how long this cipher's been tucked away in that crack of the cupboard drawer. A chink's great on ferreting out the secrets of a cupboard."

"I wish you'd got it some other way," Garvin returned, in the refined accents men involuntarily trusted. "A chink's cunning as the devil. After he gets over his miff at Estwood——"

"What can he do?" husked Simms. "We'll clean the pocket and destroy the map. If there proves to be a vein, we'll buy Estwood out if we have to take in the third party."

Garvin laughed. "I'll bet Estwood has stood on Calico Rock many a time and wondered at the signs on that triangle of pines. It wouldn't have done him any good to find this map, either. Not one man in a thousand could read it."

Rachel straightened and turned into her own room across the hall. She had been anxious to have it out with her father about some pretty clothes, for which her soul suddenly pined. Not that it would do any good; she knew his stubborn arguments. His daughter, he boasted, didn't know the need of money. She had plenty to eat, a horse to ride while other women drudged, a ready-made dress for an occasional

rout at Emigrant Springs—what more could she want? Some time, when he had made his big haul—and so on. Oh, she had heard him talk!

Rachel lighted a lamp and stood looking about her bare, whitewashed room. A pair of riding boots lopped dismally at the foot of her narrow bed; a khaki skirt and some coarse blouses bulked over a chair back. Occupying the distinction of a lone side of the room, the "ready-made" drooped its hideous magenta folds in the forlorn way of empty garments. The mistress of so much despised splendor snatched it down and stamped on it.

Stumbling through satin and buttons and lace, she went to her dresser, and out of a heap of ironed things dug a fashion magazine, hitherto studied as one reads of foreign countries on a rainy day. There was in it a picture that reminded her of the girl in the car—white, white—with much fluffy hair blousing out from a lace hood. Studying the picture, Rachel's face distorted like a child's beginning to cry. She blew out the light, and, throwing the magazine over the back of the bed, made ready for sleep in the semi-gloom.

Youth has a fountain of forgetfulness. As she lay there in the silence, dreams that were half waking conjured up a wonderful vision. She was riding with Estwood between moon-silvered ranks of Spanish dagger—not in bur-crusted khaki, either. She felt the caress of fine-woven fabrics and thrilled; then, remembering, drew her arm over her wet eyes, and finally slept.

Before it was light again, Rachel aroused, and lay wondering. Her hand, outflung, touched the magazine and she sprang up, the shadow sleep had lifted coming back to her face. Hunting out the least faded of her blouses and a crimson string tie, she dressed and wound the splendor of her braided hair around her head. Then she scribbled

a line to her father and slipped it with his mail under the office door.

Old Woonah was astir. The fragrance of coffee and corn bread filled the kitchen. Rachel fed her kitten until its lean sides puffed out, then she ate her own breakfast, took the package of lunch and an old revolver the Indian woman thrust upon her, and hurried out to the corral.

Calico Rock hid its variegated angles among the pines of Estwood's east pasture, beyond which lay the foothills, purple as pansies, their tops waking with the day. Rachel reached it by a winding side trail. She tied her horse with a long rope, and, taking a hatchet from the saddle pocket, dropped down the rock to the triangle of pines she had heard her father mention. The air was wine sweet. Slashes of sunlight slanted in the pine tops. Farther down, an amber splash that was a poppy field shimmered.

Crouched among the spicy cones and needles, the girl poked about idly among tree roots and breaks she had forced in the shale. At last she scraped the earth from a smooth surface wedged between two straddling roots. She had come upon a good-sized metal box; and, hitching the claws of the hatchet under it, she dragged it forth and pried off the rusty hinges. A leather sack fitted the box. Loosing that, she poured into her lap a stream of gold—not nuggets, but good American money!

Rachel's first sensation was disappointment. So this was some of the loot hidden during the last border war! She had heard her father and Simms speculate about it. She sat very still, running her slim fingers through the shining disks.

For a time she had forgotten the girl in the car, but for some reason the picture came back to her now. How eagerly she had held out her hand to Estwood, and how gladly he had re-

sponded! Rachel knew now; the aloofness in him that had sometimes suddenly chilled her—that was repugnance for her uncouthness. She understood many other things that she had held her head high and ignored—curious glances from well-gowned women, bold stares from men. She shut her fingers tight among the relics of a border war.

Suddenly the hot blood surged to her face. Here were fabrics fine as frost and lace and ribbons! Here was everything! Opportunity had come to her, smiling. Simms and her father were too late; they would not lose this lapful of gold at any of their favorite pastimes. Dizzy with hope, the girl jumbled the coins back into the pouch, threw away the metal box, and covered its hiding place with earth and needles. Then she climbed breathlessly back up the rock.

Out through a gap in the mountains, on the edge of Nevada, is the town of Lees. Rachel knew it—had ridden there to a roping contest. The shops were gay and white and bright, and three nights off would be a party at the Springs. Rachel climbed into the saddle and turned down the slope.

Old Garvin's daughter, eager, critical, studied many frocks that were like frostwork, frocks of sheer, shimmery texture, frocks with a touch of color in hand embroidery; but, dallying with opportunity, it was not a gown but a handkerchief that was her first purchase.

"One dollar," the shopgirl told her, and looked her up and down. So pointed was the inspection that the desert girl flung herself about and looked into one of the full-length mirrors that lined the room. From her own slim, well-poised figure she gazed at that of the shopgirl, ratted, powdered, an exclamation point of unexplainable lines, and her puzzled eyes



*The old brown face crinkled, watching the young mistress feed a wild-eyed scrap of fur before satisfying her own healthy appetite.*

said frankly: "You are still another kind, and—I don't like the kind."

The clerk reddened, and, reaching overhead, drew down the money cage and counted out the change from a five-dollar gold piece. "One dollar," she droned and handed Rachel her purchase; "two dollars, three, four, five. Silk hose second counter, left. Come again."

At another time Rachel might not have noticed anything wrong, but, in the flash light of this crisis, every de-

tail stood out separate and distinct. The clerk had counted one dollar twice, leaving but three in her hand. Unsuspectingly Rachel followed her rapidly vanishing figure.

"You lacked a dollar of the right change." She met a crushing denial innocently. "See——" She extended her hand.

The other shrugged impatiently. "Why, no. Let me count it again."

She slipped the silver from the slim, pink palm, and began as before a dron-



ing count, at the end of which Rachel gave her a contemptuous look and turned away. The trick had no doubt worked with many green customers, or with half-blind ones.

Turning "second counter, left," Rachel stood a moment very still, confronted by a sudden sickening thought. The shopgirl *had* filched a dollar, but *whose* dollar? The girl was a thief, was she? Very well, and what was *Rachel Garvin*? Stumbling against a stool and ignoring a clerk's detaining voice, old Garvin's daughter walked blindly out into the sunshine. On the pavement she stood a moment, tucking the little purchase she had made and the change into the saddle pocket; then, swinging up, she circled to the watering trough, and, without further delay, rode straight for the mountains.

One skilled in salving a crooked conscience would have pretended the thing had not happened by taking the money back where it had been found, or perhaps by sending it to Estwood anonymously, or with written words that would appeal to his sympathy; but nothing like that occurred to Rachel Garvin. She had given her whole heart to an upright man, and she must preclude the possibility of ever thrusting her crooked self upon him; must banish the thought of rides in the warm, waking wind under crimson sky or silver moon; the memory of the one caress given and taken when a sudden sand storm had blown life to a very slender thread. It was the only course of which a nature like hers was capable.

As she rode steadily, eyes thoughtful, the weapon old Woonah had thrust upon her lying across the saddle, dusk, swooping down like a big-winged bird, met its finish in the light of the early moon, and Estwood, loping in from the evening round-up, crossed the trail. Rachel had shrunk from deliberately hunting him, but she wanted the matter

over. As she stopped and waited, he recognized her and drew up. Rachel caught full the wonder of his eyes.

"You?" he smiled. Had she come out of his dreams?

For a moment Rachel sat still, the blood draining from her face, then she slipped from her horse and began fumbling at the saddle. Estwood saw that she staggered, and sprang down beside her.

"What is it, Rachel?" he cried, as she held something out to him.

"Look, and I'll explain."

The man took first the bulging pouch thrust into his hand and jammed it into his pocket, then he opened the parcel and spread its contents upon his palm. He turned upon Rachel a puzzled, questioning look.

"I bought it with stolen money," she told him steadily; "like that in the sack. I found it buried in your east pasture by Calico Rock. I am warped in my nature, and I didn't—didn't know it—till to-day."

"This is mighty pretty," Estwood touched the flowerlike points with careful finger tips. "Woven of moonbeams, I think. Maybe you imagined you only bought it."

"No, I have just come from Lees. I intended to buy everything to match that. Things like that girl in the white car wore yesterday—thin and lovely."

"And why didn't you?" Estwood's voice held a tense, low note.

Rachel looked at him dumbly, confused by the sweetness of his expression. "I don't—just know," she said.

Estwood reached out and took her gently into his arms. She was weak from fasting and the long day's strain; she could not resist now. By and by— But what was he saying?

"If you'll have me, dear, we'll be married as soon as I have asked your father—and I don't want you talking against—my wife!"



Author of "The Late Mr. Morris,"  
"Standing Guard," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LEON SUTHERLAND GEER

CONEY ISLAND is an appreciable distance from Newport, geographically and socially. The hollow forms and stilted amenities that obtain at the latter stamping ground of dollars, dubs, and duchesses are not found in the rollicking code of Coney. When a gent spies a girl in the chattering press of Surf Avenue, unattached as to escort, who looks good to him, he does not waste time hunting up her chaperon and asking to be formally presented. The season at the Island is too short.

Instead, he bestows upon the female of his kind a cheery smile of greeting, the hailing sign, as it were, of one who steps aside from the careless, hurrying crowd to bid her welcome to the revels. And if it be the mood of the damsel, buffeted by cross currents of humanity, to run up answering signals—why, there you are. That's Coney Island.

Wherefore, Mr. William Ballard Tushworthy, strolling forlornly near Luna Park, lonely amid two hundred thousand dusty and hard-working merrymakers, shook off his lethargy and straightened his shoulders when he saw a dainty feminine figure approaching with the slow step and languid manner that bespoke an ennui equal to his own.

As it drew nearer and he took in the details of a pretty face, a draped skirt that to him appeared modish to a degree, and bright eyes that looked frankly into his own, Mr. Tushworthy did more than that. The code of Surf Avenue called for a friendly smile on his part as the opening of diplomatic negotiations, and he smiled.

Though she dropped her glance immediately with becoming modesty—for modesty often travels hand in hand with good-fellowship even at Coney—Mr. Tushworthy watched the pretty face closely from the tail of his eye as she passed, and he saw the flicker of a smile illumine it. The next precept of the code was for Mr. Tushworthy to glance back at the retreating figure to discover whether she was inclined to carry matters farther than this silent exchange of salutations. When he turned, she was looking back over her shoulder the least bit. But the least bit is enough in Surf Avenue, and he promptly retraced his steps, no longer laggard and uncertain, until he was beside her.

"This is no place to be alone," he announced, without preliminary. "I was just wishing I hadn't come to-day. Now I'll take it all back."

"Oh, yes?" she said inquiringly and



*When he turned, she was looking back over her shoulder the least bit. But the least bit is enough on Surf Avenue.*

with a friendly smile. "I was thinking the same thing. In fact, I'm on my way to the elevated now to go home. It's fearfully poky out here all alone."

"Oh, don't go home!" Mr. Tushworthy urged. "Why, it's just getting good out here now! We can go home when they begin to close up. What do you say if we take a little walk and look at some of the shows?"

"All right," the apparition acquiesced after a few moments apparently devoted to thoughtful consideration, but really spent in swift appraisal of the young man, from his shiny tan shoes to his jaunty straw hat. "But I've got to start home early, honest."

It was thus informally that Mr. Tushworthy made the acquaintance of Madelaine. He learned her name while they were seated at a balcony table of an odorous Italian restaurant, looking out on the surging crowd below and sipping Fresno chianti with the slightly bored air that is always included for the modest price of that refreshment.

That was after they had slithered down scenic railways until they were dizzy, had bumped downhill in the "tubs" until they were bruised, had tumbled in the "barrel of love" until they were seasick, and walked through endless pushing, jostling crowds until they were hungry. Also, it was after the preliminary decanter of the purple juice of the Sacramento Valley had been disposed of and another was smiling between them.

"Tell me what to call you," Mr. Tushworthy had begged, leaning forward confidentially. "We're pretty good friends now, aren't we? We ought to tell our names."

She cocked her little head to one side like a bright-eyed canary, and smiled at him tantalizingly.

"You can call me Madelaine," she cooed, thrusting her glass forward suggestively. Mr. Tushworthy spilled

logwood all over the cloth in his nervous tremor as he filled it.

"And will you call me Billy?" he urged.

"Sure," Madelaine agreed cheerfully. "After I have a couple more of these, maybe I'll call you Bill."

She raised her glass, as she spoke, in playful toast to her spendthrift admirer, and Mr. Tushworthy was gallantly responding to the salute when, to his amazement, she hesitated, stared beyond him into the crowded restaurant, and hurriedly set the glass upon the table, untouched. What portion of her face was able to pale turned white, and her hands trembled.

"What is it?" he demanded, turning to look for the cause of her sudden perturbation.

"My husband!" she whispered. "That big man with that party just sitting down! Oh, he'll see me! He'll kill me! What will I do?"

Mr. Tushworthy wore no Carnegie medals on his white vest, and, as he caught a glimpse of the imposing figure Madelaine had indicated, broad of shoulder and towering above the head waiter, who was placing chairs for a party of four, he measured the distance to the exit with a troubled glance and decided he could never make it if the irate husband should bear down upon them.

"Turn around a little," he advised her in a despairing tone. "Don't look over that way! Of course, he'll see you if you're not careful! We'll have to get out of here some way," he added, mopping his brow fervently.

"I thought he was out of town," she whispered, shielding her face a little with her hand, in which she clutched a tiny handkerchief.

"I wish he was," growled her Billy. "But that doesn't get us anything now. Maybe they'll go out in a few minutes if we sit still."



"My husband!" she whispered. "That big man with that party just sitting down! Oh, he'll see me! He'll kill me! What will I do?"

"No, they're ordering dinner!" Madelaine wailed through her handkerchief. "They're going to stay. He'll know my hat if he looks around!"

Mr. Tushworthy racked his brains for a way out of his predicament, and

surprised himself by getting an inspiration.

"Suppose," he began, moistening his lips as he found some little difficulty in speaking, "suppose I go out alone down the aisle near the wall and you—er—



follow me after a few minutes. I don't think it would attract his attention so much as if we went out together."

"Oh, don't leave me!" she gasped. "Billy! You wouldn't desert me now! He may come over here any minute!"

"That's just the trouble!" Billy declared earnestly. "What good could I do if he came over? Don't you see it would only make matters worse? There's no sense in *me* getting mixed up in this business. If he found you sitting here alone—why—why, it would be all right, wouldn't it? I ought to go, Madelaine," he concluded desperately.

A chair scraped behind them, and Mr. Tushworthy jumped three inches off his seat. Madelaine stole a glance in the direction of the danger zone from behind the handkerchief.

"What is it?" he gasped, watching her face for signals of distress.

"He's coming!" she whispered, and Mr. Tushworthy distinctly felt his body and soul sink down into his shoes and ooze out on the floor.

Steps sounded close to their table—heavy, shuffling steps. Madelaine held her handkerchief over her eyes and lowered her head as if she were suffering from headache. It looked to the palsied Billy as if she were praying, and the idea came to him that it might be a good thing to do. He tried desperately, but could think of nothing more impressive than "Now I lay me down to sleep." He abandoned it immediately as being too suggestive of the situation and waited for the blow to fall. The steps passed their table, and Madelaine, peeping cautiously from behind her improvised screen, whispered a word of hope.

"They've passed us," she murmured. "They're out on the far end of the balcony, looking at the crowd. He didn't see me. But they'll be coming back!"

Mr. Tushworthy thrust a careful hand under the table, feeling for his hat on the chair beside him.

"Now is our time," he hissed through clenched teeth. "We can get out before they turn around. Come on!"

Brooking no further delay, he rose and stepped into the main room of the restaurant, not even pausing long enough to be sure that his lady friend was with him. But she was right at his elbow in a moment, and they hurriedly threaded their way between the massed chairs toward the haven that showed in the distance—the stairway to the street.

Indignant elbows were jabbed into the Tushworthy ribs by lounging diners against whom he caromed in his mad flight, but he paused not until the hand-rail of the welcome staircase was almost in his grasp. A sudden remembrance of Madelaine made him hesitate for an instant to learn whether she was still in his wake. Then, from the noisy, clattering room behind them came a shout.

"Stop 'em!" yelled a voice that silenced the chattering tongues of a hundred merrymakers. "Hey! Don't let 'em out!"

In the hush that followed, Mr. Tushworthy heard the rush of feet coming after them, the rattle of chairs as their impetuous pursuer plunged through the crowded restaurant. His knees felt like jelly, and his heart dropped against his ribs with a painful bump, but his one thought was flight—to separate himself from the fair troublemaker at his elbow before her indignant husband descended upon him in all the fury of his two hundred and twenty pounds.

He heard Madelaine utter a little squeal of alarm, but he stepped forward resolutely toward the staircase, ready to roll down to the street if necessary. Suddenly from nowhere appeared the head waiter, built on the generous lines of an auto truck, who placed a firm and detaining hand on Mr. Tushworthy's heaving chest.

"Hold on here a minute," he said. "Vat's the matter?"

"Get out of the way!" hissed the desperate guest. "I want to get out! There's going to be trouble here——"

"Vell, if there is, you stay and see it," the floor manager suggested. "Somebody wants you here."

His capable hand closed upon Mr. Tushworthy's coat lapel as the hastening footsteps drew nearer. Surprised diners rose from their tables and began crowding forward to see the fun. Madeline shrank back a step, but the resourceful head waiter blocked her escape with his other hand. It was all over. The jig was up. Mr. Tushworthy turned with ashen face and lips that trembled a bit and faced the perspiring waiter who had served him and Madeline.

"Huh! You try to sneak out without paying the check, eh?" he demanded, waving the bit of pasteboard under the young man's nose. "You think you're one smart feller! But I got you, all right!"

A wave of temporary relief surged through Mr. Tushworthy's sinking frame, and he hastily thrust his hand into his pocket.

"Oh, the—the check!" he stammered. "I forgot it. How—how much is it?"

"Aha! You forget, hey?" the irate waiter sneered. "That's no good! That's too thin! You forget, and, if I don't catch you when you sneak out, I have to pay your check! You are one cheap skate!"

"O-o-h-h! Pay him and let's get out of here!" Madeline wailed, while her trembling escort was fishing up bills and nickels with shaking fingers. A score of grinning spectators were crowded in on them, and the sturdy German still clung to Billy's coat.

"Oh, yes!" he growled. "You pay, all right! But you don't get out of here. We have the police for swindlers

like you that tries to cheat honest men of their money."

"Say, look here!" quavered Mr. Tushworthy, casting an apprehensive glance toward the front end of the room, where the disturbance was beginning to attract attention. "I'm not trying to cheat anybody. Here's your money. How much is that check?"

"It's two-forty," the Italian announced. "You know very well how much. You have it counted up before you try to run away."

"Nothing of the sort!" Madeline interposed. "It's merely a mistake. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Good stuff!" commented a voice from the crowd. "That's the talk, girlie! Give it to 'em!"

Mr. Tushworthy, meanwhile, had counted out the exact amount and handed it to the waiter, who took it with a snarl.

"Now if you'll let go of my coat," he suggested to the heavyweight floor manager, "I'll get out of here."

"Ha! Ha!" came a scornful laugh from that quarter. "Is it so? You go some place else with your lady and run up bills you can walk out of, huh? Not much. Tony, call that copper off the corner."

The waiter, anxious to oblige, disappeared down the stairs, and the crowd closed in to watch the exciting finish. From the front end of the room, where his nemesis was sitting with three husky friends, Mr. Tushworthy saw various parties of diners making their way toward the excitement. Any instant might bring Madeline's husband and then——

"What's the idea of this?" he demanded in his despair. "You've got your money. What do you want to make me all this trouble for?"

"I teach you von lesson, Mr. Smart Aleck," the manager announced, looking around for approval from his patrons. "You can't play that game here and get



"This is an outrage," Mr. Tushworthy began, but Madelaine suddenly plucked his sleeve.  
"Come on with him," she whispered. "They're coming."

away with it. You go by the station house—and your girl, too, if she says much!" he added, with a glare at the shivering Madelaine.

Up the stairs the policeman came clumping in the wake of the triumphant Tony. He looked at the group apathetically.

"What's the trouble?" he demanded.

The manager told him explosively. Madelaine wept quietly, and Mr. Tushworthy, keeping an eye out for two hundred and twenty pounds of indignant husband, tried to explain.

"It was all a mistake, officer," he said. "We were going out in a hurry, and I forgot the check. I've paid them their money."

"Do you want him locked up?" the officer asked.

"Sure," the German declared. "Else vy should I call you?"

"This is an outrage," Mr. Tushworthy began, but Madelaine suddenly plucked his sleeve. In the distance she had seen that grim party of four rise from their table and slowly move toward the stairway, unconscious as yet that anything unusual was going forward.

"Come on with him," she whispered. "They're coming."

Mr. Tushworthy cast a frightened look in the direction he knew his fate to be, and suddenly surrendered.

"All right, officer," he said. "Come on. Let's not talk about it any more. I'll go with you."

He started down the staircase with the puzzled policeman close behind him and Madelaine bringing up the rear. Into the noisy, colorful crowd on Surf Avenue they plunged, and at the corner the policeman paused with them.

"Say, young fellow," he said, "I ain't goin' to go through with this. It's too much trouble and there's nothin' to it. That Dutchman's got his money, all right. You'd better beat it."

"All right," Mr. Tushworthy said,

and he was two steps away before he thought to turn around and add a weak "Thank you."

Then he turned to Madelaine. If she had had a strongly developed case of plague, he could not have been more anxious to bid her farewell. She was still white and shaken, and there were traces of tears on her face.

"Well, I suppose you ought to be getting home," he said. "How about taking this trolley here as far as the elevated station? I'm not going for a while—I'll just put you on the car."

Madelaine understood, and she made no protest.

"All right," she said. "Thank you."

They were standing in the blaze of electric light, waiting for the car, when suddenly she squeezed his arm and tried to shrink behind him.

"Look!" she whispered. "There they come!"

Mr. Tushworthy looked toward the restaurant they had just quitted. Not ten feet away came the quartet in which the broad-shouldered giant he had been dodging loomed conspicuous. They were strolling down the avenue, well fed and jovial—at peace with the world. There was no refuge for Tushworthy and his companion. He tried to hide behind a telegraph pole as the four came nearer and passed, looking them over indifferently.

The gong of the approaching trolley car sounded inordinately loud in his ears, and out of its din he heard Madelaine's piping voice.

"Why, that isn't my husband!" she exclaimed. "I didn't get a good look at him before. But it looks awfully like him!"

Mr. Tushworthy did not venture a reply. He seized her elbow, stepped with her to the car, and swung her up on the platform.

"Good night!" he said with extreme fervor, and turned away, mopping his perspiring brow.







# Vacation Days

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

WHEN a medical adviser suggests a vacation, he is using another term for *rest and change*. To those whose physical condition does not demand this advice, vacation means *recreation*; but unhappily the vast majority of young people—and there are no old ones to-day—look forward to a *good time*, to crowding into a few weeks an amount of energy that, commuted into work, would move a mountain. For, not satisfied with every sort of activity during the day, the strenuous dances of the moment are indulged in to the wee, small hours.

Such a regimen must be harmful to health and beauty, and there are always some unfortunates who never completely recover from a too vigorous summer campaign. Nor, on the other hand, does recreation mean the suspension, during the time allotted to a vacation, of every form of physical exercise. There are many women—and some men—who believe a change of scene and diet the only requisites of an ideal holiday, and who practically live on the hotel porch, or sit in groups, and gossip on the boarding-house verandas. Many an unsullied reputation has been besmirched by the summer idlers who spend their time dabbling about

in the "stagnant goose ponds" of scandal. Such pastime is undiluted poison to a healthy soul, and should be avoided as a pestilence.

To *recreate* is primarily to *refresh*, and that must be the main thing ever borne in mind when planning the vacation holidays: *To refresh body, mind, and spirit; to rejuvenate.*

There are those whose condition of life makes it impossible to leave home for even a brief period—wage earners, to whom an enforced vacation is a financial blow, and who much prefer toiling on for the weekly sum earned; housekeepers, who cannot be spared by selfish families; sacrificing wives, who prefer remaining in town with their husbands. Then there are the few practical ones who recognize the fact that holidays can be more sanely spent at home than at third-rate, overcrowded hotels and boarding houses. No problem arises to those who possess suburban homes, or who live in small towns; but to the city dweller, especially when one's place of residence is a flat or perhaps a lodging house, the arrangement of one's vacation to the best advantage presents some difficulties.

However, much in the way of pleasure, profit, rest, and *real* gain in health



Rest the body and tone up tired facial muscles.

and looks can be gained even under the most trying conditions if a sensible regimen is carried out. The daily bath, which is so absolutely essential to one's well-being, more especially during the heated term, but which must frequently be entirely forsworn at small hotels and boarding houses, is a boon to the stay-at-home. The day should begin and end with a refreshing bath, and, if possible, a shower. When the weather is intensely hot, several baths during the day cool the blood, soothe the nerves, and make for peaceful rest. Often during hot nights when sleep cannot be wooed, a plunge into cool water or a cold sponge—plain vinegar or toilet vinegar in the water further enhances its cooling properties—quiets the fretted nerves, and refreshing slumber follows.

Out of doors should be avoided during the heat of the day—that is, from ten a. m. to three or four p. m. In hot countries the residents never venture on the street during these hours. It is well to rise with the sun, and in the beginning of the day look after such matters as need attention; to seek out a sequestered nook, and enjoy the

fresh morning air. If nothing else can be done, take a ride in the open surface cars, returning before the sun is high.

During the hours of seclusion, it is well to take an inventory of one's beauty needs, and to devote some time each day to the process of physical improvement. There can be no more ideal time than this, nor a more propitious occasion, than the leisurely hours spent in the coolness of one's room, resting and toning up tired facial muscles, removing lines traced by the hundred-and-one vexations that weary the

flesh through a succession of strenuous days; rejuvenating the feet—willing plodders!—and in many other ways gradually, day by day, lifting, as it were, the body up to a higher plane of physical beauty.

While this suggestion is directed particularly to those leading business lives, whose vacation is the only oasis in the rush and hurry of the year, it is also a valuable hint to health and beauty seekers generally, and especially to those away for a brief holiday, whose one desire lies in crowding all the pleasure possible into each twenty-four hours:

The effect may not be seen or felt, but it is sure to leave its impress. Take time to refresh the body and to tone up local features that require it. It is well to have a preparation on hand to overcome oiliness of the skin, especially of the face; the following is simple and effectual:

FOR OILY OR GREASY SKIN.

Boric acid .....	½ dram
Alcohol .....	½ ounce
Rose water .....	5½ ounces

Mix, and mop off the surface with this solution; after which apply rice or complexion powder.

Toilet creams, lotions, and milk containing the juice of cucumber are ideal for summer use. Formulas will be sent on application.

The diet should be carefully regulated. Meat is not necessary in summer, as it is very heating. Cold food is preferable to hot. Green vegetables, salads, ices (sherberts), fruits, and the like, will keep down the body temperature and help immensely toward the positive enjoyment of hot weather.

The question of clothes is not apt to worry the stay-at-home; nevertheless, it is well to remember that fresh clothing is conducive to health, and that raiment which is light in texture and in color contributes to one's comfort and looks. If the fashions of the moment have done nothing else, they have rescued us for the time being from the starched abominations—especially stiff shirt waists—which we bore and wore in our trying climate with a degree of righteous determination that the feminine sex displays in no such unanimity on any other question in life. So luckily the fashions will be in conformity with our fatiguing summer weather—scant and almost diaphanous being the mode of the day.

Unless one has a large wardrobe and a maid, it is decidedly easier to appear to the best advantage at home, and that at less expenditure of time and money. Unless one enters upon a summer's campaign with an avowed object

in view, such as social advancement or the furtherance of some matter of serious import, it is folly to put much time, money, and energy into clothing and all the necessary details that go with it. Indeed, it frequently happens that those who plan and design do not reach their goal, while others with "no malice aforethought" are singled out for courtesies.

At all events, a simple summer wardrobe saves time, expense, and worry,

but it must be carefully planned with due regard to two factors, both of which are of equal importance. First, however simple, clothes must be built on individual lines and express the wearer; then, no matter how few or how simple, they will always be in good taste. The second factor is the selection of clothes appropriate to the place where they are to



Secure the hair under a close-fitting rubber cap.

be worn. If one plans to live in a camp, one requires a different outfit from that needed at a hotel in some fashionable resort, and, if wise and strong-minded enough to go far from the madding crowd and spend one's vacation ideally, then clothes afford no problem whatever, for old clothes fill every requirement.

Holidays at home and abroad will be doubly enjoyable and rejuvenating if the feet receive the attention they deserve. All callosities should be removed, the toes well pedicured, and the flesh kept cool; only in this way can they be prevented from swelling and

burning. When corns are removed by a skillful chiropodist, they may never appear again. Salicylated collodion is a good application for this purpose in the hands of those who fear to use a knife. Emory boards remove callous growths on the soles of the feet and on enlarged toe joints. Antiseptic dusting powders should be used daily in all footwear, hose as well as shoes. An excellent preparation of this sort contains:

Salicylic acid .....	3 parts
Talc .....	7 parts
Starch .....	9 parts

Pulverize, and mix the three ingredients.

Sensitive feet should always have an extra foot bath in which alum, tannin, or arnica is used. When the feet are very tired, a bath containing two tablespoonfuls of the following mixture is restful:

Alum .....	1 ounce
Rock salt .....	2 ounces
Borax .....	2 ounces

Let the feet rest in this solution for ten minutes; on removal, allow the moisture to dry in. After a bath always don fresh hose and cool shoes. For actual comfort, footwear should be slightly larger in warm weather, and preferably white, but always light in color, as black absorbs and retains heat.

Perspiring feet may become a source of real distress. Formulas for preparations that will overcome this trouble will be sent applicants.

The summer holiday is an excellent time in which to rest the hair. As a rule, vacationists neglect it and subject it to very rigorous treatment, especially at the seacoast. Elaborate coiffures should be avoided. Straight hair, which is unbecoming generally, can be coaxed into waves with the aid of bandoline. One of the preparations that best withstands strong winds and damp air is made of quince seed. When this dries on the hair, it forms a powder

not unlike dandruff, all of which can easily be removed with a brush. To make it, a tablespoonful of crushed quince seeds is placed in a pint of water and gently boiled down to three gills. Strain and add two tablespoonfuls of cologne and alcohol. For very oily hair, a half teaspoonful of powdered alum, first dissolved in the alcohol, is added.

Unless one is willing to go to a great deal of trouble to prevent the hair from being ruined, surf bathing had better be forsworn altogether. How often does one see a luxuriant growth of hair completely immersed in salt water and then allowed to dry under a torrid sun! The brine of the sea coarsens and ruins the hair; and, aside from the salt, the water is full of deleterious matter which has an injurious effect upon the scalp. The combined action of sun and water have a powerfully bleaching effect and absorb the natural oils as well, leaving the hair dry, coarse, brittle, and streaked.

The hair should be regularly prepared for surf bathing. It is a capital plan to "put it up" in wavers. This not only aids materially in preventing all stray hairs from slipping below the rubber cap to be worn, but helps greatly toward a becoming coiffure later in the day. The hair should be pinned very snugly on top of the head and completely covered with a close-fitting cap, over which a silk-rubber hat with a brim for protection to the eyes should be worn. Whenever the hair becomes wet with salt water, it should be thoroughly washed out with fresh water and an antiseptic soap. Fan it dry or allow a current of cool air to play upon it.

At the coast the damp, salt-laden air makes the hair sticky and heavy, so that more frequent shampooing is necessary. Preparations that dry out the hair should be avoided; instead, oils that preserve the healthy condition of

Continued on second page following.





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## VACATION DAYS

the scalp and hair roots must be employed. Otherwise, the action of wind, salt, and sun is ruinous, and the hair is a feature that cannot be restored under a year or even two of unremitting care, sometimes never.

A good tonic containing oil, admirable for use in dry climates and at the seacoast, is available to all readers.

Man has never got completely over his amphibian instincts, which may account for the popularity of water-front resorts, and especially for the call of the sea; and justly so, as there is nothing more exhilarating and invigorating than wind-blown salt air.

Surf bathing, when judiciously undertaken, is highly beneficial; it stimulates the functions of the entire body and is an ideal form of enjoyment within certain limits. But it can be overdone even by the strongest, and this is sometimes the case with those whose vacation allows them only a few weeks, or even days, in which to indulge in their favorite sport.

Expert bathers are very difficult to manage and are usually those who get into trouble, as they will heed no warning. Women, no matter how strong or how expert at swimming, should never go out beyond a certain depth, should never swim around piers, or do antics in the water, or remain in the water very long. Those who boast of these things are foolhardy. To remain in the surf longer than ten minutes the first day—or if a novice at the sport, even though a good swimmer—is to invite temporary congestion of the internal organs, with possible retardation of their functions, that may be the beginning of considerable future trouble. This applies particularly to women who have not the physical stamina to react immediately, and who become victims of functional organic lesions of

one sort or another in consequence. In some the skin happens to be the most sensitive part, and while a certain amount of salt water is tonic, too much irritates, and eruptions often result.

For physical development nothing surpasses swimming; it reduces over-flesh, fills out hollows, and equalizes the musculature generally. It induces deep abdominal breathing, thus exercising all the trunk organs, accelerating the circulation, and rapidly eliminating waste. It models the figure as nothing else can, and makes for perfect symmetry. It exerts, also, a wonderfully beneficent action upon the central nervous system by awakening an inner consciousness to self-reliance, thus establishing *poise*.

Women swimmers should wear garments that leave their movements as free and untrammelled as those of men. Narrow skirts must be discarded here, as they are dangerous. The arms should be covered with long, loose sleeves; and all exposed parts should be protected from the burning sun by inunctions of cream and a coat of powder. Men use cocoa butter, which is very good—but it has a tendency to coarsen and darken the skin.

Sandals that lace well up the leg are not only more attractive than the average bathing slippers, but strengthen the ankles in swimming. Rest, and, if possible, sleep, should invariably follow surf swimming or bathing, as it is a very strenuous exercise, and, to secure its full benefit, it must be pursued on principles of health.

It goes without saying that persons with organic lesions of any kind, *weak hearts particularly*, should under no circumstances go into the surf.

NOTE: Directions for the treatment of sunburn, tan, freckles, and the like will be sent on application.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



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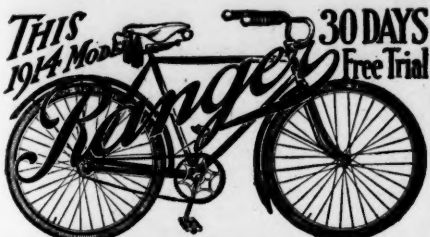
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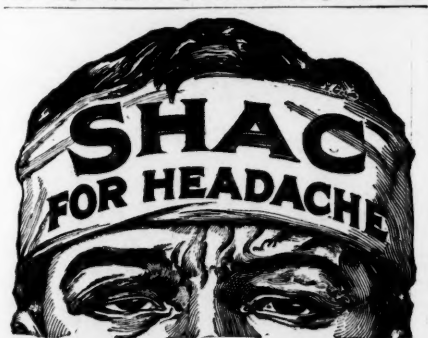


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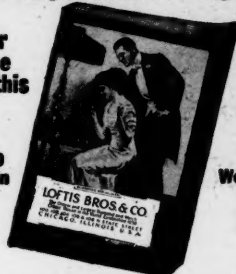
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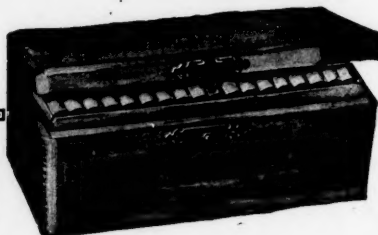
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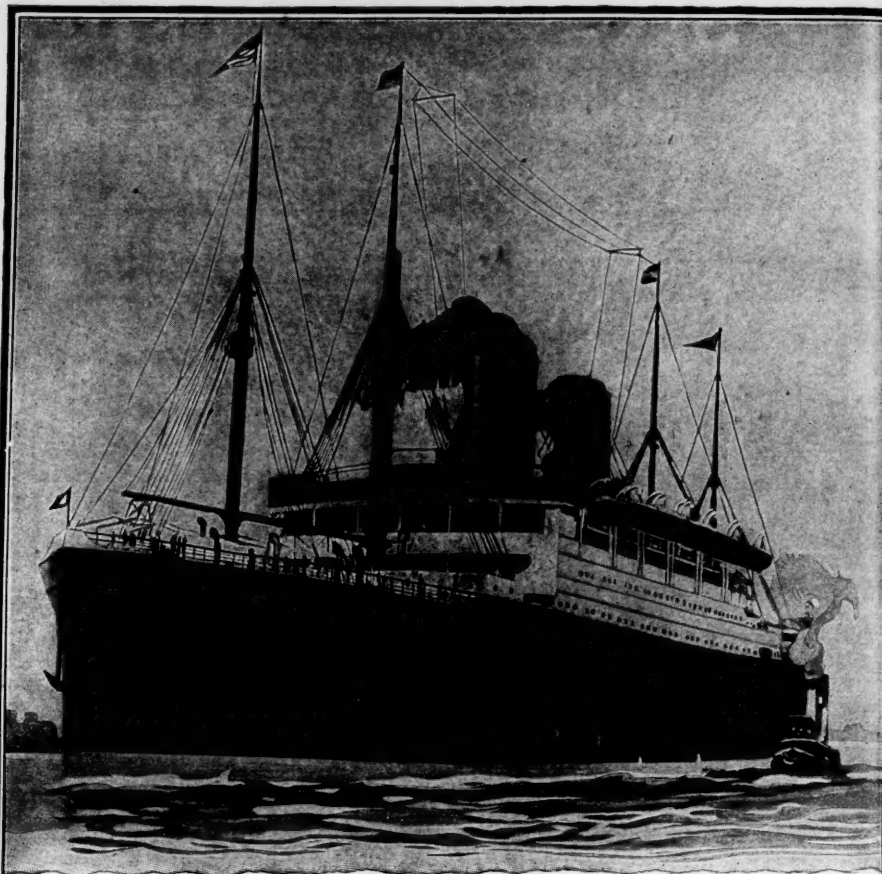


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